2: Stefansson--240 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
123, 117

"Difficulty in obtaining Information. We had great trouble in getting any information out of them. They are far from garrulous. Our many inquiries as to where the Nagyuktogmiut are and how to be found, brought an invariable 'We do not know, we never were there.' It was an accident we found out that three of them did know the way by winter, straight down the middle of the strait. Either these had not been present when we inquired, or they had been silent when those who did not know spoke up, I think the latter is the fact. The others must have known too, by hearsay. [sic] but in every case, we got, 'We do not know' as an answer when they had not themselves actually seen the thing, except information as to their ancestors. This character I have often noted in Eskimo to the west, but never so marked as here. They will also agree with you in anything. After telling us in a body of three islands known as 'the hares' (ōkalliit) they at once agreed with Pan. who said they were only two in number as a woman had told her who had been there. This is a place where people habitually cross the strait, and no doubt many knew positively how many there are, but they immediately agreed with Pan. that there were only two. My chart shows three islands (Liston and Sutton) and I have no doubt there are three. Similarly, after telling B. that the Nagyuktogmiut consider the Itkillik bad people, they at once agreed with him when he said they were very good people. They had previously said to me 'We do not know what sort of people they are, for we do not know them.' "

3: Rasmussen--5 (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 123

"The material for this book was collected in just under three months. Only one of these was spent under conditions quite enough for me to work more or less undisturbed, whereas during the remainder of the time I was either travelling for the purpose of visiting the various groups or occupied in procuring food for our dogs. As a consequence I had to make my dispositions for the work in a manner other than had been the case with the earlier books, which circumstance also necessitated a different arrangement of the material. That the result has nevertheless been so voluminous is particularly due to the fact that among the Musk-Ox People I found splendid Eskimo collaborators, who not only were possessed of a wide knowledge of the traditions of their tribe, but also to an astonishing degree understood the purpose of my work and at all times were ready to answer enquiries and in the fullest way supply me with the information I required. This most creditable assistance has made it possible for me to make very comprehensive linguistical records despite the short time at my disposal. As singers and interpreters of the old spirituals the Musk-Ox People were really outstanding--as poets perhaps the most gifted and inspired Eskimos I have ever fallen in with. Their store of legends, on the other hand, was only small, and as the art of narration among them moreover was remarkably primitive, I have considered it necessary to preface every legend with a resumé of substance and meaning in order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the literal translation. I have included everything that was told me, even the very slender and apparently insignificant fragments, for some day they may be useful as variants and as a comparative material."

5: Jenness-2A (1913-16) 1924 Copper Eskimo
116, 123, 538

"It is possible of course that the sketchiness and incompleteness of the Copper Eskimo mythology is rather more pronounced in this collection than it should be, owing to the difficulty I experienced in inducing the natives to impart their knowledge. Even those Eskimos with whom I had lived in the closest association for over a year were reluctant to tell me anything for fear that their fellow-countrymen might disapprove. Towards the end of our stay, indeed, as more natives became gradually involved, they were more communicative, and their reluctance will doubtless rapidly disappear with the influx of white men and western natives into their territory. It may then be found that the traditions known to these Eskimos are considerably more numerous and complete than would appear from this collection."

12: Collinson--248 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 123

"On the 9th three natives visited us, being the first we had seen since the 10th of last month: they were admitted below, given something to eat, and shown a place in the square of the main hatchway on the orlop deck, where they were to sleep; and after enjoying the singing, dancing, and fiddling on the lower deck, they went to bed very quietly. Friday morning, however, being the weekly day for the inspection of the men under arms, they unfortunately took alarm on the muskets and cutlasses being got out of the arm racks, and went off before I was aware of it. However, on the 23rd of December we had a visit from fifteen more, who, no doubt, had heard of the hospitable treatment the others had received, and were admitted below; we tried to explain to them that we had accommodation for three or four to sleep, but that we could not accommodate the whole party. Some preserved meat and rice was given them to eat, and they all took their leave in the course of an hour. Several articles were, however, secreted and stolen by them on this occasion; and this, with the bad odour which the high temperature (to them) of our lower deck caused their persons to reek with (all of them being in a violent perspiration), induced me to forbid their being admitted between decks unless on special occasions."

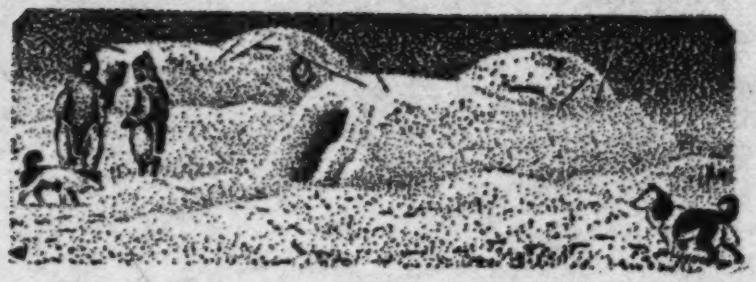
12: Collinson--285-286 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 123, 157

"As will be seen in my journal, [T.M: See page 248, cat. 116, 123] three only, and that on one occasion, were persuaded to remain on board during the night, and although very desirous to cultivate their intimacy, I could not induce them to venture again; perhaps my anxiety in this instance produced suspicion. Our communication, therefore, must be regarded as casual visits, in which neither party as yet could understand the other; but although guilty in some cases of theft, they have left with us the [286] impression that they are a kind-hearted, well-disposed people; and gave me similar feelings to those which appear to have taken place on the first intercourse between the inhabitants of the New and Old World."

13: Jenness--81 (1914-1916) 1917 Copper Eskimo
116, 123

"During the two years from September, 1914, to July, 1916, I lived in their winter settlements, which are distributed all the way from Dolphin and Union Strait to Bathurst Inlet, and in that time I spent seven months--April to November, 1915--wandering alone with them in the southwestern part of Victoria Island. The following account of their life and its relation to their Arctic home is based on my experiences during that time and on information obtained from other members of the Canadian Arctic Expedition."

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8



CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE OF THE TWILIGHT

114

GLOOMY and barren seemed the country around Bernard Harbour when we first set foot upon its shore—a land of long twilights soon to be swallowed up in a longer night. A few vestiges of habitation there were—stone rings that marked old camping-sites, and shallow pits from which the hunters had launched their arrows at the passing caribou. But of the Eskimos themselves, of those dwellers in the twilight who even then were awaiting the dawn of the new age, we saw no sign.

114
• 123 It was they who discovered us a few days after our arrival, and sent two families down to reconnoitre. Their tent, nestling in a narrow fold among the ridges, caught the keen gaze of Anderson, who was gathering botanical specimens before sailing for the west. Two men armed with long knives advanced to meet him, and some women and children peered anxiously around the corner of the tent. He patted his chest and pro-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

nounced his name. Their expressions changed instantly, 114
for Anderson had visited the Coppermine River three 123 •
years before and his name had spread far and wide. "Andeseena," they cried. "It is Andeseena. We are glad, we are glad." Invited by gestures to accompany him down to the harbour, they followed with alacrity, and gathered on the beach beside our anchorage. We feasted them to their hearts' content, and gave them a few presents which, trifling enough to us, appeared in their eyes riches beyond measure. They left us the following day to return to the interior, and we saw them no more until the winter.

Another band heard of our friendliness and descended to the station in September. They halted when they saw Palaiyak and myself on the beach, and, standing in line on the ridge above, raised and lowered their hands to show that they held no weapons. We had been hunting seals, and carried rifles, which seemed to increase their nervousness; so we laid them on the ground and answered the peace-signal, repeating it two or three times as they anxiously awaited our approach. Dried fish and hard bread dissipated their fears, and some petty gifts unlocked both their tongues and their curiosity. They introduced their wives and [224]
children to us the next morning, and departed inland before noon to resume their caribou-hunting.

The timidity of these Eskimos came not from ordi- 829
nary cowardice, but from a superstitious dread of the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

mysterious powers which they believed all white men possessed. The leader of the second band, whose right hand was tightly bandaged and whose thumb lay inside a small bag suspended from his neck, sufficiently attested their physical courage. Three weeks before he had stalked and wounded a grizzly, and when the infuriated animal attacked him he had thrown away his bow and killed it with his hunting-knife. His thumb was the price of the encounter, and he kept it as a souvenir. But a bear was a familiar adversary, a white man a being unknown; and this old hunter, who did not shrink from the grizzly, trembled with fear the first time I touched his arm.

Except for one other brief visit from the second band we saw no more of the Eskimos until the winter. Only Chipman, travelling far inland in search of caribou, encountered one of our early acquaintances packing dried fish from a cache. The Eskimo offered him a salmon rather heavily encrusted with mould, and Chipman returned the compliment by dividing up his sandwiches. Side by side they sat down on the edge of a lake to eat their lunch, though neither could understand a word of the other's language. *"Kovearnarksilekpakpogle,"* said the hunter to open up the conversation; and Chipman, not to be outdone, patted him on the back and responded, "Good for you, old fellow, good for you." Both broke into peals of laughter and repeated the performance. They separated at

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

the conclusion of the feast, but the novel friendship persisted, and the hunter always treated "Hippimanna" as a brother whenever their paths happened to bring them together. 123

About the middle of November, when Chipman and O'Neill were outfitting for their journey, the Eskimos in the hinterland gave up caribou-hunting and settled on the coast to prepare for the sealing season. Five families who had built their snow-houses a few miles east of our station now paid us daily visits, and the women rendered good service by making us clothes and sleeping-bags from the raw furs we had brought on our schooners. They sewed most of these articles inside the station, where we provided the necessary needles and thread; and they behaved amazingly well, considering their inexperience of white men and the strangeness of the surroundings. Their broad, smiling faces enlivened our sober home, and their keen sense of humour led to many amusing incidents. They thought the panes of glass a novel kind of ice, and on their first visit could not distinguish the door from the rest of the house. "Knee," a comedian already admitted inside, laughed and gesticulated at them through the windows, and when they wandered round and round, seeking in vain for the entrance, gravely advised them to try the stove-pipe. 221 [361] 123

Their honesty, alas! was not above suspicion. Nor could we feel surprised. We were white men, beings

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123 of an unknown world, possibly their enemies. So many wonderful things lay in full view around them, things that we regarded but lightly or threw aside as worthless. One after another these began to disappear; first a few discarded tins, then some needles, then a spoon or two. We paid no heed for a time; but when more valuable articles vanished from the house we decided to watch our visitors. We knew they concealed the stolen goods on their persons, although we could discover no pockets in their fur
291 clothing. Both sexes wore loose jackets like European swallow-tail coats, with hoods that pulled over the head. Their breeks, bound tightly round the hips, reached no lower than the knees; and their feet were encased in tight-fitting shoes of tanned sealskin. Yet there was one noticeable difference, for whereas the men had fur stockings tied above the calves, the women wore enormously wide "gum-boots" cut away on the inner sides so that a great pouch bulged out below each
291 knee. We could find no reason for this feminine
123 footgear until a woman slyly dropped a large cup into one pouch. Then we realized that it might have its uses, and solved the mystery of our stolen utensils.

123 It was these "gum-boots," perhaps, that made the women the worst offenders, sometimes the very women whom we least suspected. Palaiyak reported that he had seen one of our frying-pans in the hut of Mrs.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

Light, a motherly old lady for whom we had entertained the greatest respect. It fell to my lot to recover it, so I quietly asked her to bring back our *ookoosik*, as the Eskimos call all cooking vessels. The old lady smiled graciously and went home. Two hours later she returned and handed me, not the frying-pan, but an enormous four-gallon pot that, unknown to us, she had also filched from one of our caches. 123.

To distract their attention from our station and caches I decided to study the natives at their own homes, and to that end induced them to build me a snow-hut. There I lived beside them for three days, enjoying their hospitality and sharing their food as they shared mine. Their life was very tranquil at this period; the women stayed home and sewed, while the men wandered back to a small lake and fished until dark. In the evenings they questioned me about my own country. Some of my food tasted good, they said, especially the sugar; but why did I eat so much grass (rice and oatmeal) instead of strong, nourishing meat? Were seals and caribou not numerous in my land? And my woollen clothes, from what strange skins did they come? Were they the best garments that white men could secure? Surely their own country was far richer than mine. [512] [221] [562]

They told me one evening of a large tribe that was mustering on the opposite side of the strait, and a man volunteered to guide me to the village. Together we

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

• 123 returned to the station, that I might prepare an outfit and leave with him early the next morning.

My guide was greatly alarmed when he found himself alone inside our house with three white men and an Eskimo from an unknown tribe. To calm his fears I showed him an old book about Greenland. A picture of a toy dog excited his curiosity, and he tried to take the animal up in his fingers. When the hour grew late we made him a bed on the floor beside Palaiyak; but he sat staring in front of him, too frightened to lie down. Palaiyak slept soundly; one after another the rest of us turned into our bunks and extinguished the lamps until only the night-light remained. The house was wrapped in silence; even the dogs outside lay still. At last he mustered up his courage, stretched himself out under the skins, and slumbered noisily.

114 We passed the first night in a snow-hut on one of the Liston and Sutton Islands, reaching the coast of Victoria Island late the next evening. There was no moon, but the dim light of the hurricane-lantern enabled my skilful companion to construct a new hut almost as quickly as by daylight. While he was building the walls I closed all the chinks and cracks with soft snow to keep out the cold air. I carefully adjusted, too, the snow-block that served as a door, for I was determined to be warmer this night than I had been the night before. We both slept soundly until morning, when I rose, lit the lantern, and tried to ignite the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

primus lamp. But the lamp refused to burn, and even the lantern began to go out. Then I realized that I had made the hut too air-tight, that the oxygen was exhausted, and that we would quickly smother unless we broke down the door and let in some fresh air.

Skirting the coast-line, we came upon fresh tracks leading away from a primitive fox-trap built of snow-blocks. Presently we sighted four men coming from different directions, who ran toward a common focus behind a ridge as soon as they noticed our sled. My companion raced ahead, flinging up his arms in the peace-signal as he, too, disappeared from my view. I followed more slowly with the dog-team, and, breasting the ridge, discovered the four strangers lined up as though on parade, the tallest man on the right. He announced his name, I told him mine, and, stepping down the line, introduced myself to the next man with as much formality as at a president's levee. But the last youth had three names, all very long; and he pronounced the three in one breath. My ears could not register so many ponderous syllables, and I said with a smile, "Phew, *takirut* (What long names)." The strangers gasped at this amazing breach of etiquette, but immediately saw the humour of the situation and laughed uproariously.

We approached their village in triumph, two of the men escorting me in front, two racing behind with my companion. Their twelve snow-huts lay at the bottom

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

of the bay, where a band of children were rolling hoops along the ice of the foreshore. "White man, white man," my companions shouted as they ran. The villagers poured out of their houses and crowded around me, men jostling women, and women pushing aside men, in their eagerness to scan my face and tell me their names. At the last came a tall, dignified man of about middle age who warmly seized my arm and invited me to enter his hut. When I crawled in behind him he set me in the place of honour at the back of the sleeping-platform, dusted the snow from my shoes, and seated himself in front at my feet.

My guide had relatives in this village with whom he proposed to spend the night; but I had many notes to write and desired a separate snow-hut where I could be quiet and undisturbed. The Eskimos gladly built one for me while I unharnessed and fed the dogs; and they vied with each other in unloading the sled, hoping to catch a glimpse of my trade goods. Some stayed to share my supper, boiled rice seasoned with sugar and canned milk; and it was amusing to watch their faces as each in turn swallowed a spoonful of the novel dish. Not all of them shared my own opinion of its excellence, and the discussion that arose about the white man's food might have lasted all night if the distant booming of a drum had not diverted their thoughts and brought about a hasty exodus. The people were holding a dance in my honour, and awaited

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

my presence in the dance-house, which was in this village the forecourt of a large two-roomed hut. Seated in state on a sleeping-platform I watched their monotonous performance for two hours; then weariness overcame me, and, slipping through the low doorway, I retired, unattended, to my new home.

Eskimo dances have a superficial resemblance to the open-air meetings of a church army band, except that the only musical instrument is a drum. The singers form a ring around the leader, who hops and prances rhythmically to the accompaniment of a song. As one dancer tires and steps back into the ring, another takes his place. Women and children alternate with the men, for the sexes have almost equal status in this twilight land. Sometimes the faces of the singers glow with such earnestness that even the alien spectator succumbs to the emotional atmosphere and joins in their embryonic religion. Thus with song and dance they while away the evening hours until one after another drops out of the circle and the gathering dissolves to its homes

I measured the heads and statures of the Eskimos from early the next morning until mid-afternoon. Every man who submitted to the operation received a fish-hook, every woman a needle; and the payment seemed to satisfy them all. On completing these measurements I traded for museum specimens, bartering knives, files, and other articles for lamps and pots

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

of stone, ladles of musk-ox horn, and garments of seal-skin and caribou fur. The natives, growing more and more excited as my stock of trade goods diminished, jostled and clamoured for place, fearful of being too late for the bargains. Finally a riot threatened, and I resorted to strategy, stopping the trading to fill or relight my pipe whenever their emotions gained the upper hand. By evening I had exhausted all my goods and amassed enough specimens to fill my sled for the return journey.

Two of the villagers accompanied me back to the station, partly from curiosity, partly to gain the advantages of early trading. They were not the representatives I myself would have chosen, for they were young and inexperienced, with all the presumption that often goes with youth. The size of our outfit awed them a little the first day, and the many strange instruments set up around the station amazed and bewildered them. But their embarrassment passed away overnight; consumed by curiosity, they wanted to handle everything they saw and begged continually for whatever seized their fancy. Palaiyak was quite disgusted with them. He told them about the missionaries who were coming the following year, men who would teach them the good life that led after death to the sky. But our guests assured him they had no desire to go to sky-land; they were content

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

with their own country, which contained enough seals and caribou to satisfy all their needs.

I intended to revisit the settlement on Victoria Island at the earliest opportunity, but preferred to choose my own travelling companions. Our guests therefore returned alone, while I arranged to spend a few days in the hut of the leader of our local tribe. My host, the hero of the skirmish with the grizzly, had now recovered the use of his right hand, and was preparing to cross to the Liston and Sutton Islands for the seal-hunt, since it was still too early in the winter to build a hut on the sea-ice far away from land. He suggested that I should join his train to the islands and push on later to Victoria Island, which was but thirty-five miles beyond; and as the invitation accorded well with my plans I accepted gladly.

The wife of my host was Light, the lady who had filched the pot and the frying-pan from our station. It has not been my habit to lodge among thieves, but my experience on this occasion was most encouraging. Light was charming as a hostess. She licked my plate before each meal that I might eat from a clean dish, and when handing me boiled seal meat from her steaming pot she squeezed it tenderly between thumb and forefinger that no surplus juice might drip on my clothing. Lacking candy, she showered on me the national substitute, delicate cubes of oily seal-blubber;

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123
[262] but, lacking the national taste, I slipped most of them surreptitiously to the dogs.

114
[123] Two of the five families in this tribe crossed to the islands a day earlier than the others. I accompanied the second party, which started out in the darkness of the morning. After traversing the first nine miles without difficulty we came upon rough ice that had been piled into jagged hummocks by the autumn gales, and my light sled, modelled after a European
114 pattern, upset three times before we passed through.
493 The Eskimo sleds were more stable, for their crossbars rested directly on the stout runners, and with the heavier articles, such as stone lamps and bales of meat and blubber, lying at the bottom, the centre of gravity was close to the ground. None of them overbalanced, although they were piled six feet high with the household possessions.

114
823 The nearest of the islands was Putulik, "the island pierced with a hole"; for legend stated that a large cave extended under the water from one side to the
114 other. We approached it shortly before dark, and
342 my host sent forward his twelve-year-old son to pick out a house-site. The inexperienced lad chose a spot where the snow was too shallow, but his father, sounding the depth all around with a long stick of antler, quickly found a more suitable location. While the men erected their huts, the women built low ramparts around the outer walls to increase the warmth inside

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

a better idea of its shape and internal arrangements than a lengthy description. Theoretically a snow-hut may be of any size, provided you have ladders, or timber to form a staging. The Eskimos have neither. To build a large dance-hall like that shown in the plan they stand on boxes, bales of clothing, and anything that may be available. So the height of their largest hut never exceeds eight feet, and the diameter is limited to correspond. Being a sociable people, however, two families often share a single dwelling, and two or three others arrange their huts so that they open onto the same passage.

Imagine us, then, sitting on the edge of the sleeping-platform eating our supper, myself at one end of the line, Mrs. Light at the other facing her table and lamp. The different members of the family are grouped between us, two boys, a grown-up nephew, and lastly Mrs. Light's husband, who naturally has a seat beside his wife. The youngest boy carries presents of fish to the inmates of the other huts, and two little girls who return with him, bringing similar offer-

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

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ings for us, stand shyly inside the doorway, kicking their feet together restlessly as though knocking off the snow. Every one is tired after the day's journey, and as soon as the meal is ended strips off his clothes, tucks them under his head for a pillow, and glides into a sleeping-bag of caribou fur. Mrs. Light is the last to retire, for she still has some small duties to perform. She calls in the dogs from the passageway, one by one, throws them a few strips of blubber, and drives them out with the snow-duster, a short stick for beating the snow from our garments. Then she adjusts the lamp for the night, turns our boots and mittens so that they will dry on both sides, fits the snow-block into the doorway to keep out the cold air and the dogs, and slips quickly into her husband's "double" bag of caribou fur. Most of the inmates sleep with their mouths open, and their loud snores reverberating inside the hut drown the less resonant notes of the dogs in the passage.

Leaving Putulik, I rejoined my late acquaintances on Victoria Island. The sun no longer climbed above the horizon, and the "day" was limited to the twilight hours from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.; but a bright moon lit up the trail for me during the last three hours of the journey. The tribe was still living in the same settlement, for the women had not completed all the new fur clothes their families required during the winter months, and it would violate one of their most rigid taboos to finish the sewing on the sea-ice.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

rigid taboos to finish the sewing on the sea-ice. My old snow-hut was empty as I had left it, but cold and cheerless without the warm glow of a blubber-lamp. Seeking more comfort in an inhabited hut, I became the "guest" of a man named Snow-Knife, sharing my food with his family and giving them presents from time to time in payment for occupying half their dwelling. The arrangement proved fairly satisfactory for two or three weeks, but later in the winter I changed my quarters and lodged with another family more sensitive to my personal comfort than to my worldly possessions.

The women sewed industriously from morning till night, but the men found the time drag heavily. Some of them were still bringing in the caribou meat they had cached during the summer, and the pokes of blubber left on the coast in the spring. A few set fox-traps obtained the previous winter from Captain Bernard, the first and only trader who had visited their country. The rest stayed quietly at home and put their sealing-gear in order, or helped their wives to scrape the caribou hides.

In one hut that I visited a middle-aged Eskimo was trying to repair a 30.30 Winchester rifle he had purchased from Captain Bernard. A bullet had stuck in the barrel, for, like many a more civilized hunter, he had scrupulously oiled the outside of the weapon, but entirely neglected the inside. He hammered on the

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

bullet with his ramrod; when that failed, he borrowed another rifle and fired a blank cartridge down the muzzle, while a crowd of natives stood around him to see the result. Fortunately there were no casualties; the chamber merely swelled to the size of a hen's egg and cracked. Then the man and his companions, thinking that the tempered steel might be malleable like the native copper they used for their tools, attempted to weld the crack by pounding on it with a heavy stone.

Hitherto I had escaped all friction with the natives; now came my first trouble. I was sitting in their largest hut, bartering knives, files, and cooking-pots for the usual museum specimens. A native offered to exchange a small horn drinking ladle for a twelve-inch butcher's knife, and I refused, since the knife was worth a dozen such ladles. He knew that all my companions were fifty miles away, and determined to take by force what he was unable to obtain through barter. He seized the knife, and I seized his wrist. In strength we were equally matched; he could not release his wrist, nor could I force the knife out of his fingers. The hut was crowded to suffocation with Eskimos, who made no attempt to take part in the struggle, but waited to see the issue. They had no chief, no one with authority to settle the case at strife; if my adversary won, the more lawless would band together and strip me of everything I had. The

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

123 437 situation seemed desperate as I played my last card. Looking sternly into the man's eyes, I intoned in English, slowly and deliberately, "If—you—do—not—hand—over—that—knife—there—will—be—no—more—trade—between—your—people—and—my—people."

The effect of these words was magical. The natives, understanding no English, thought them a curse that would bring some dire calamity upon their heads. My adversary was terrified. He glanced at his kinsmen uneasily, not knowing what might happen to him the next minute; but—he still clung to the knife. Then the owner of the hut caught hold of his arm and ordered him to release the weapon. It dropped from his fingers, and he pushed through the crowd to the doorway. Not until many weeks later did he venture to appear in my presence again, or to visit our station at Bernard Harbour.

I refused to trade for some days after this incident, and threatened to cut off all trade at Bernard Harbour during the winter. The loss to the Eskimos would have been infinitely greater than to us, because there were only three things we wished to purchase—caribou meat for ourselves, seal meat for the dogs, and [411] museum specimens. The natives, on the contrary, had many wants; they cried insistently for steel knives, iron pots, and metal goods of every description, but above all for rifles and ammunition to replace their bows and arrows.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
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arrows. We had supplies in abundance to cover most of their needs; but the other members of our party spoke no Eskimo, and had gladly delegated all the trading to me after the first day's experience. Anderson, who joined us at Christmas, approved the arrangement, which held throughout the duration of the expedition. It placed a power in my hands that increased my security among the natives and rescued me from more than one awkward predicament. On this occasion the mere cessation of trade for a few days quelled their aggressiveness and checked any further attempt at open robbery.

As soon as the majority of the women had finished their sewing, the Eskimos began to migrate along the coast to a low promontory from which they could cross in one day to the Liston and Sutton Islands. They moved on different mornings, and at different hours of the morning, some early and some late. Their only clocks were the sun by day and the moon and stars by night; but the sun had now disappeared for several weeks, the moon set early, and the stars do not shine through walls of snow. So my host, who wished to set out at daybreak, roused his household nearly three hours too soon; and his grievous error made us shiver in idleness on the sleeping-platform until it grew light enough to load up the sleds.

The villagers were too practical to carry all the furniture out through the long passageways when they

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some friends in British Columbia, and felt our isolation slip away for a few hours as we joined with the rest of the Christian world in common festival. 900

Our enlarged party now required more accommodation, so the store became a kitchen fitted with bunks for Castel and Cockney. The two western Eskimos, Palaiyak and Ikey, slept in a tent surrounded by snow-walls covered with a tarpaulin roof. The house itself was reserved for the six members of the scientific staff. That, at least, was our intention; but unfortunately the natives around us were too civilized to read the notice on the door, and inundated our hut as frequently as before.

Christmas ended, I returned to my Eskimos at Putulik, in the Liston and Sutton Islands, taking Palaiyak as assistant and interpreter. The natives whom I had visited on Victoria Island had also gathered there, so that the settlement now consisted of some thirty families living in twenty-five snow-huts. We erected our tent right in their midst, and built a snow-hut over it, both for warmth and for extra storage-room between the two walls. Not wishing to violate any of their customs concerning the sharing of food, we entertained two or three visitors at every meal, and distributed the scraps among the crowd at the door. Trading and visiting among the houses occupied most of the day-time; but after the hunters returned from their sealing we attended the celebra- 124 361 114 123 123 [437] [124]

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123 437 124 tions in the dance-house, or gathered the elder men inside our tent and enquired into their customs and beliefs.

802 Compared with the Eskimos of Alaska, these natives were astonishingly primitive. Their language contained no word for any number beyond six. I induced a woman to count on her fingers, and she began, in her own tongue, "one, two, one." I corrected her, and she started again, "one, two, three." There she stopped, and a man standing beside her said "four." Both had forgotten the words for the next two numbers, considering everything above four as many. Yet they were not so primitive as to be easily short-changed in any transaction, for they could separate a pile of articles into groups of three or four and count them with tolerable accuracy. A man to whom I gave only nineteen cartridges instead of twenty fitted them into an empty box, discovered the error, and indignantly demanded the missing round.

125 532 These people lacked, too, the artistic skill for which their kinsmen in other places are famous. I distributed pencils and paper to several adults, both men and women, and asked them to draw sketches of people, houses, caribou, and anything else they cared to attempt. The results were amusing, similar to what we should expect from a child of six. Even my chart [823] they were unable to follow. One man, more intelligent than the rest, seemed to grasp that a certain

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line might represent the coast along which he had recently been travelling; but when I asked him to name and point out the positions of the capes and streams he had passed on the way, he placed his finger indifferently on places as far apart as Victoria Island and Great Bear Lake. Yet an Eskimo of northern Alaska, who was unable to read and had never held a pencil in his hand, once drew me a remarkably accurate outline of the Colville River and all its tributaries, besides many vivid sketches of camp scenes and the hunting of seals and caribou.

Among the specimens I bought at this time was a large lamp which we immediately put to use for warming up our tent. It was made from soft soapstone, and shaped like an enormous saucer cut in half. We filled it with crushed seal-blubber, and along the straight front edge arranged the wick of cotton-grass seeds, which are not unlike cotton-wool. The lamp, when burning perfectly, gave a low smokeless flame an inch high and about sixteen inches long, quite sufficient to keep us comfortably warm even with the door partly open; but as neither Palaiyak nor I were very skilful in adjusting the wick a thin layer of soot began to form over the inside of the tent. We hired two little girls to keep the dogs away when we were absent, and my "daughters," as the people laughingly called them, gradually assumed responsibility also for the lamp, which they managed to perfection. I rewarded them

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on the first occasion by holding a private party at which they shared the white man's food—tea, hard bread, and chocolate. When I left them in charge again the following day they immediately trimmed the lamp, placed a pot of water over the flame to boil, and set out the cups for another afternoon tea.

These Eskimos of Dolphin and Union Strait forbade any cooking of caribou meat on the sea during the winter months, believing that it would cause the ice under their settlement to upheave and engulf them. Eskimos living farther to the eastward were less scrupulous, and often cooked caribou meat when they were camped on bay ice that was not likely to crack under the stress of a winter storm. But a strong current passes through Dolphin and Union Strait, and new cracks and pressure ridges make their appearance as late as the end of January. The regulation was therefore rigidly observed by the local Eskimos, who often warned us against infringing it at Putulik, even though their settlement was only a few yards from the shore. Palaiyak, my western Eskimo, who had outgrown most of these superstitions, was more annoyed than I that we should be compelled to eat our venison raw, or else carry it to Bernard Harbour, where our house was built on solid ground. We avoided the regulation in the following winter by a subterfuge. The Eskimos then built their settlement closer to the beach, and the hut in which we were living had rock, not ice,

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beneath the snow-floor, making the prohibition technically invalid. We cooked our caribou meat with easy consciences, and, when the natives upbraided us, pointed to a tiny patch of gravel exposed beneath our feet. Some accepted our verdict, most of them still disapproved; but by that time they were better acquainted with the strange ways of the white man, and believed that we could do with impunity what they could not attempt without disaster.

The village dance-house formed as usual the forecourt of two snow-huts, which kept it at an even temperature with their two large blubber-lamps. One hut was occupied by Ikpuckhuak, the elderly man who had come to my rescue when his fellow-tribesman tried to carry off my knife. Ikpuckhuak means the "Dirty One"; but the name in no wise reflected on his personal characteristics, for the Eskimos were too familiar with the lack of water during seven months of the year to pay much attention to some of its consequences. Ikpuck, as I shall call him hereafter, was actually cleaner than most of his countrymen, provided one gives the word a rather broad interpretation; and his name was no more than an ancient family title which he inherited in childhood along with his other privileges.

We spent several pleasant evenings on his sleeping-platform, reclining comfortably on caribou robes and listening to the natives in the forecourt singing their

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AMONG THE SNOW-HUTS

At the first dance we attended, a medicine-man gave 737
an exhibition of his powers on behalf of two natives who had failed to capture any seals. He made a short speech from the centre of the ring, but suddenly broke off with a cry of pain and covered his eyes with his hands. Low groans shook his body; the protecting spirit that entered him seemed to rack his frame with agony. He raised his head and stared at us, his eyes wild with frenzy and his mouth working convulsively, although not a sound escaped his lips. The spectators on every side flung questions at him, and he turned eagerly from one to another, nodding his head whenever the answer was "Yes." In this way he informed us that two men had died recently somewhere to the eastward. The first spirit then left him as suddenly as it had entered, and a second, that took its place, restored his power of speech, but left his frenzy unchanged. In a weak falsetto he announced that the two hunters had alarmed the seals with a hatchet, but that the protecting spirit speaking through his lips had now removed the curse, and their next seal-hunt would be successful.

The medicine-man's performance lasted over half an hour, two or three more spirits taking possession of him in quick succession. The last refused to depart, and made him stagger so heavily that I thought he would faint. The spectators asked me to tap him on [123] •
the head with some matches, those marvellous fire-

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123 sticks that only the white man knew how to manufacture; but even they were not powerful enough to restore his wandering senses. Perhaps my hand would be more efficacious. I laid it on his temple, and saw his eyes rest on me without a gleam of intelligence. Then the madness passed out of them, a pleased smile broke over his countenance, and, quietly turning away, he began a casual conversation with some of the bystanders.

771 Performances of this kind revealed to me the heart of Eskimo religion. The natives trusted in their medicine-men, and the medicine-men, with rare exceptions, believed themselves gifted with supernatural powers. The spirits that wander unseen came at their bidding and obeyed their commands. At times they came unsummoned, and a man raved on the hill-sides or on the frozen sea where no one beheld his frenzy.

771 Hysteria is peculiarly common around the Polar basin;
158 the long winter darkness and the loneliness and silence
171 of the hunter's life make the Arctic peoples more susceptible to this disorder than the rest of the human race. So religion and hysteria went closely hand in hand.

114 After measuring all the adults in this village I
125 arranged with a native to guide me to another some
114 forty miles farther west. We had travelled about half
837 a mile when, looking back, I noticed with surprise that
574 a woman was following in our trail. I turned to my

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honour. They had built no dance-house, and did not possess a drum; but about thirty squeezed into an ordinary dwelling-house eleven feet in diameter, where they banged my frying-pan and sang at the tops of their voices until the snow-ceiling, melting with the warmth of so many human beings, began to drip ice-cold water on our heads. The din and odour were terrific, more than flesh and blood could endure; so, pushing my way through the crowd, I retired to the purity of the outer air and gradually regained my senses.

We remained in this village one day and two nights while I measured all its adult inhabitants. Seal meat was not plentiful, and a longer stay would have left my dogs without food. Moreover, it was not necessary, for I was now formally introduced to the people, and could study them at my leisure when they joined the other two tribes in the Liston and Sutton Islands at the end of the month.

My party on the return journey was increased by three—Wealthy's cousin, whose wife was already at the island village, and two girls, Mrs. Snow-Knife's sister and another, who were bound on the high-road to matrimony. The brides piled everything they owned on top of my sled, which creaked and groaned under the extra load. Luckily their trousseaux were not as formidable as their white sisters', or we should never have reached our journey's end. The average Eskimo

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her to his nephew, who divorced her within three weeks for the same reason. Since she was barely fifteen years of age even after her second marriage, and could easily secure a third husband whenever she wished, we persuaded her relatives to grant her a year of freedom. Childhood came back to her during these months of respite; and no girl in the country seemed happier. Finally she married a young Eskimo brought in by some traders from the Mackenzie River delta; but of her subsequent history I have no record.

Palaiyak and I returned to Bernard Harbour about the middle of January, for Anderson wished me to join him on a trip up the Coppermine River. We conducted to our station an Eskimo family and Ikpuck's step-daughter Sculpin, one of the two little girls who had tended my blubber-lamp. Scuplin, or Jennie, as my colleagues christened her, became a general favourite through her frank smile and merry laughter. More intelligent than most of her people, she knew how to keep out of our way, and spent many quiet hours in a corner mending the rents in our clothing, or gazing at the pictures in our books.

My scientific equipment included an Edison recording phonograph and a number of blank cylinders. Now that I had gathered at the station a small party of Eskimos easily handled and fairly familiar with our ways I used the opportunity to record some of their dance-songs. The Eskimos had paid little attention to

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126 the gramophone of Captain Bernard, our predecessor
• 123 in this region, because they failed to understand the white man's music; but they looked with awe on the uncanny machine that reproduced not only their words but even the ejaculations that unconsciously escaped their lips. The first man who sang into it shivered with apprehension when he heard his voice come back to him out of the horn, and asked in an anxious whisper, "Is there a spirit concealed in the box?" Nothing would induce him to sing again, and for a time I feared that this first record of their music would also be my last. But little Jennie rose to the occasion; she was too young and innocent to fear the white men who had hitherto done them no harm, and the phonograph was an exciting adventure. She sang half a dozen chants for me that evening, and made the house ring with laughter when we played them over again, and she heard the coughing that interspersed the words. Thenceforward I had no difficulty in finding singers, and we carried out of the country records of 150 songs for future study.

114 Palaiyak and I paid another brief visit to the island
123 Eskimos before travelling eastward. Jennie went back with us, and we lodged in the house of Ikpuck, her step-father, because it was more convenient than a
[142] private hut that needed constant guarding. Ikpuck's
[551] wife was a comely matron, weighing something under 200 pounds, who rejoiced in the possession of two

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names, Liver and Icehouse. Both seemed rather misleading; she was really neither choleric nor frigid, but a jolly, high-spirited old lady with the warmest heart imaginable, and a tongue more prone to gossip than was strictly advisable. She received us with open arms, and resigned to us half the platform in her hut, where we slept and stored all our possessions. Since her platform looked directly into the dance-house, the centre of social life, we saw everything that happened in the community, or heard it reported to our neighbours.

January was generally the coldest, darkest, and stormiest month in the year, the only month that the Eskimos really dreaded. Blizzards often confined them to their houses five days out of seven, and even if a hunter braved the storms he could find no seal-holes through the driving snow. Hunger then reigned in every hut, and the inmates shivered with cold as they extinguished their lamps one by one to conserve the oil. But the winter of 1914-15 was unusually mild. Blizzards were rare even in January, and they were separated by periods of calm weather when the hunters captured five and six seals daily. So the lamps burned brightly in all the houses and the natives were light-hearted and happy. They gaily assembled in the dance-house each evening to while away the hours with song and dance; and their medicine-men often gave weird performances, not to relieve distress, but simply to maintain their prestige and entertain their audiences.

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755 A little sickness was inevitable in the circumstances of their lives, and the medicine-men conjured in vain over one man who was slowly dying of a malady I myself could not diagnose. Several natives had coughs and colds, the result of changing from the outdoor life of summer to the seclusion of the winter hut. Ikpuck himself suffered from rheumatism, and borrowed my belt for a season that the vitality in my body might be transmitted to his own. Another invalid, the medicine-men said, was cured by Jumbo, my dog, who retrieved and restored his wandering soul. In gratitude they tied a band of soft white fur around the dog's neck to keep out the cold. Yet none of their ailments appeared serious except that of the dying man; and his had lasted too long to cloud the cheerfulness that pervaded the little community.

123 I revealed to the villagers my intention of travelling eastward, to visit some of their countrymen. They tried hard to dissuade me, asserting that the natives around the Coppermine River were so unfriendly toward white men that it would hardly be safe to venture among them. Of course, what concerned them was not my personal safety so much as the loss of trade through my absence, and the competition from the large body of eastern natives who would immediately flock to Bernard Harbour. They altered their tactics when they found that dissuasion was useless, and even heaped on me a number of petty commissions. One

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One woman gave me a knife to present to a kinsman, another a pair of sealskin slippers; and so many sent messages that I kept a special memorandum of them all in my note-book.

One commission, and one alone, I declined to take upon my shoulders, although petitioned by an old, old man whose voice quavered so that it was hard to refuse him. He besought me to restore his widowed daughter, who lived somewhere to the eastward; to load her property upon my sled, share my tent with her, and bring her safely to his home. The task was beyond my capacity, but I referred it to our party at the station, and proposed that one of my colleagues should rescue the distressed lady. The choice fell on Johansen, whose beard was long and fatherly. But Johansen demurred, claiming that a younger knight, Cox or O'Neill, was more fitted for such an enterprise. They, too, drew back; one and all ungallantly refused their aid. When I met the woman later in Coronation Gulf, she proved to be the greasiest and worst-favoured native along the entire Arctic coast!

The Eskimos had no word for farewell in their language, but came and went without ceremony. We left them in the same way, hitching up our dog-team early in the morning and crossing the narrow strait to our station.

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sion, but hitherto we had not been able to report our safe arrival at Bernard Harbour and the progress of our scientific work. The first three months of the year, it is true, are not the most favourable for travelling; the days are short, the weather stormy, and the snow, away from the coast, both soft and deep. But even if he were unable to reach Fort Norman, the constant travelling would harden the dogs for their strenuous work in the long, mild days of spring; and the problem of feeding them would really be simplified, since caribou abounded in the valley of the Coppermine River throughout the winter, whereas at Bernard Harbour we had to purchase seal meat from the Eskimos. All things considered, it seemed advisable to undertake the journey. The seaman, Castel, was an efficient companion who could easily be spared from the station; myself and the Eskimo Palaiyak could form a supporting party to freight some of the supplies part of the distance and to establish caches of food against their return; and Johansen could accompany us in the hope of doing some biological work among the spruce forests of the Coppermine Valley.

February 2 arrived, the date set for our departure. About 8 A.M. a bluish tinge began to creep over the snow. It grew perceptibly brighter until we could distinguish the dark shore-line of the harbour, and the island that barred the entrance. In the distance the Liston and Sutton Islands appeared as a thin black

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225 inland would snap the lashings of their bows. This was not true, for other Eskimos who possessed no weapons except bows and arrows before the introduction of rifles hunted in the interior all through the [354] winter. But these inland Eskimos used caribou fat in [171] their stone lamps, and caribou fat is a miserable substitute for seal-blubber, which gives a far purer and hotter flame. There lay the real explanation. The Coppermine Eskimos could have hunted the caribou if they wished, but they preferred the sea-ice and its more comfortable homes lit up by the burning blubber.

132 The temperature was only —30° F., 20° higher than inland, when we reached the mouth of the Coppermine; yet the cold seemed more biting, for the air was damp, the atmosphere foggy, and a slight north-east wind blew directly in our faces. We struck out 123 northward over the ice, and on the second day sighted [225] three Eskimos standing over their seal-holes. They viewed with alarm the strange sled and toboggan, so different from any of their own; but our peace-signal banished their fears, and they joyfully guided us to their village a few miles farther on. The whole population turned out to welcome us and to assist in setting up our tent, which they seemed to understand almost [354] as well as ourselves. They understood, also, our stove for burning wood, for they informed us that there was no driftwood within five miles of their settlement and 177 offered to lend us two stone lamps and a little blubber.

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In these and other ways they showed a greater familiarity with the customs of the white man than the natives of Dolphin and Union Strait. We found even more astounding evidences of contact with Europeans when we visited their snow-huts.

The village itself differed slightly from the usual type, the houses being arranged in line and separated by considerable intervals; normally they lie in a cluster, in order that no evil spirits may harm the inmates as they wander in the darkness from one hut to another. Johansen and I began our tour at one end, and dropped a trail of matches and needles along the line to show our appreciation of the scraps of blubber, meat, and fish with which each housewife paid us tribute. The last hut was also the largest. A dance-house framed the entrance, and half a dozen dogs, twice the usual number, squabbled in the passage, indicating that the occupant was a man of influence in his community. We brushed the dogs aside, and crawled on hands and knees through the low doorway at the inner end. Seated in state on his sleeping-platform was Knife, by repute the shrewdest Eskimo, and the most powerful medicine-man, in this section of the country; and on each side of him, supporting his dignity, sat a wife, the one chosen for her beauty, the other for her skill in hunting. He smiled a welcome as we entered, and, with a haughty gesture of his hand, motioned the younger woman to give us her seat.

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123 We lingered a few minutes only, but I visited him again in the evening, when he had the stage all set for
272 my reception. The hut was thronged with hunters
415 sipping oily tea from two small china cups. Over the blubber-lamp hung an iron cauldron from which Knife dipped up the evil-looking beverage with a greasy
123 ladle of musk-ox horn. Some of his treasures lay
177 beside him, dragged out of bags and boxes for my edification. There were two rifles, a Hollis double-barrelled fowling-piece, a pipe, plug tobacco, and part of an American magazine; strangest of all, a Roman breviary and an illustrated French Scripture book.

177 How, and where, had he obtained these last? Hanbury, the English explorer who passed through this country twelve years before, had certainly not carried them on his sled. Captain Bernard might have brought some of them on his vessel when he wintered in 1910 near the mouth of the Coppermine River; but surely he had no Roman breviary or French Scripture book? How did they come into the possession of the Eskimos?

797 I questioned Knife. The previous summer, he said,
177 he and his kinsmen had traded with three white men near Great Bear Lake. One of the white men, who wore a robe and a crucifix, was especially friendly, and when Knife and his companions secured him a supply of fresh meat, rewarded them with many presents, among them the rifles and the books.

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knowing that without aid they themselves could never reach the timber. One priest went in front to break the trail, the other marched behind the sled, threatening the natives with his rifle whenever they halted or turned back. The terrified Eskimos plotted to kill them and watched for an opportunity. When the priest behind them slackened his guard for a moment they leaped upon him with their knives, stabbed him to death, and shot his companion with the rifle. Then they cut open the bodies of their victims and ate the livers, a gruesome custom general among nearly all Eskimo tribes to render the spirits of the dead innocuous.

The hunters now returned and reported their crime to the people at the mouth of the river, who ascended to the scene of the murders and plundered the sled. Knife was not present on this occasion, but the following summer, while we were establishing our base at Bernard Harbour, he and his kinsmen pillaged the missionaries' cabin at the Dismal Lakes. Several Eskimos in this village that Johansen and I were visiting held property belonging to the priests, and the ringleader of the two murderers actually entertained us in his house. Strangely enough, we were greatly impressed by his bearing, and considered him one of the most enterprising and reliable natives that we had yet encountered.

Police arrested the two murderers about eighteen

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transport all his property even with two wives and six dogs.

The natives travelled sixteen miles before they unhitched their teams and built new snow-houses for the night. The men went sealing the next morning, for at this season of the year they rarely had food for more than three days, and could travel long distances only in stages. Elated with the number of seals they captured they moved on the following morning, although the temperature was —29° F., and a howling north-west gale lashed their faces with hard snow. Johansen and I put on masks to protect our cheeks and noses, but discarded them before noon when the thick layer of frost that formed on their inside began to cling to our chins. Many of the Eskimos had their cheeks frozen, still more their wrists, for their short travelling mittens left an uncovered space between the hands and the coat-sleeves. Yet in the height of the storm a woman crouched down in the lee of her sled, withdrew a tiny baby from under her jacket and leisurely changed its sole garment, a diaper of caribou fur. The baby suffered no harm, apparently; but children were not always so fortunate, and the infant mortality was terribly high.

We had no intention of letting this horde of more than a hundred natives break in upon the tranquillity of Bernard Harbour without due warning. Our dogs

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123 travelled faster than theirs, and our tent did away with the necessity of halting before dark to build a snow-hut. We pushed ahead of all the sleds and camped eight miles beyond them at Cape Lambert. One long day's march then brought us to our station on March 1, the exact date pre-arranged for our return. The vanguard of the Eskimos did not appear until twenty-four hours later, by which time we had made preparations for their reception.

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CHAPTER VI

LENGTHENING DAYS

BERNARD HARBOUR presented a scene of extraordinary activity and confusion during the three weeks following our return; in fact, it was the busiest and most populous trading post in the whole of Arctic Canada. Five-score natives were living in snow-huts along the beach not fifty yards from our door; and from a similar settlement a few miles away men, women, and even children drifted across daily to trade with us and to visit our neighbours. We tried to bar them from the house during the day and let them enter after supper only; but they flooded in at all hours, and treated the place exactly like one of their own homes.

I myself was glad of their presence. I could spend

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• 123
437 the whole day inside our warm house writing down
126 their customs and beliefs; and I could buy all the specimens they offered me, for the tents where I stored them lay right at our door. The natives sang dance-songs each evening into my phonograph, and helped to transcribe the words when I played them over for their entertainment. True, their numbers embarrassed me occasionally; they jostled my arm as they crowded around, talked incessantly all at the same time, and laughed at the babel of their own voices. But they were always good-natured, and genuinely interested in helping on my work.

123 The other four residents of our little home hardly welcomed the intrusion, although they cheerfully endured it from a misguided compassion for me. They usually took refuge in their bunks after supper, to delve into Arctic literature or ponder over scientific notes; but whenever the invasion threatened to overwhelm me, they came to the rescue by delivering an attack on the flanks. O'Neill displayed queer conjuring tricks, Johansen showed pictures of strange birds and animals, Chipman drew the likenesses of our visitors, and Cox made them join hands and dip for trinkets into a bowl of salt water connected with two or three electric cells. The natives turned the tables on us one evening by subjecting our faces to a rigid scrutiny. Chipman and O'Neill, they concluded, were very young because they seemed to grow no beards, but

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Johansen, who wore an imperial, and I, who trimmed my beard once a week with a pair of No. o clippers, were quite elderly. They asked me at last whether the two former were not my sons. I gravely assured them they were not mine, but Johansen's.

Nothing disturbed the harmony of our relations until some natives from the settlement near the Liston and Sutton Islands reported that one of their young men had died a short time before, and openly accused me of his murder. They could not charge me with physical violence, for I was a hundred miles away on the Coppermine River at the time of his decease; but they said that I had stolen his soul by magic, and deliberately withheld it until his body pined away and died. Foolish as this accusation seemed, we could not blind ourselves to its seriousness. The Eskimos knew nothing of our law or of the police. Their own penalty for murder was assassination, unless the relatives of the dead man agreed to accept a heavy blood-price. They might not have dared to apply this penalty to me, because trading would cease immediately and my well-armed party make reprisals. But no one could say what would happen. Certainly it was not safe for me to wander in and out of their huts as freely as before; some hot-headed individual might forget discretion and stab me in the back as I crawled through a low doorway.

In spite of the preponderating sentiment against

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123 627 756 me, a few of my Eskimo friends still believed in my innocence, and sought for an influential medicine-man who could unravel the mystery of the young man's death. Knife's arrival was well timed, for no medicine-man in the district enjoyed greater prestige. The familiar spirits of which he was the mouthpiece spoke infallible truth, and whether they pronounced me innocent or guilty the verdict would carry credence everywhere.

Palaiyak returned from the snow-huts on the beach one evening and whispered in my ear that Knife was in the dance-house preparing to hold his investigation. I calculated the chances quickly. Knife knew that I spoke his language, and it was not in Eskimo nature to accuse a man of murder to his face. Moreover he was crafty, and would consult his own interests before everything else. At the present moment he sorely needed ammunition and other goods that I could supply. Would he dare to name me guilty to my face? I decided to attend his séance and hear the verdict myself.

123 627 787 (533) The people had ceased dancing when I entered the hut and were whiling away the moments by singing without the drum. Half of them were drawn up in a circle; the remainder, for whom there was no room in the ring, formed knots of two and three in the background. Over in one corner stood Cockney, our English cook, who had been quietly watching the

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performances. He did not know that I was accused of murder, or that anything more was in progress than an ordinary dance, and it seemed wiser not to enlighten him. Knife himself sat on the sleeping-platform, paying no heed to what went on around him; but he glanced at me furtively when I entered and looked a trifle disconcerted.

The singing continued but a few minutes longer, when the impatient audience entreated Knife to summon his familiar spirits. He sat now with closed eyes, half dozing as it seemed. Suddenly he gasped, choking cries burst from his lips, and, staggering into the centre of the ring, he motioned me to stand near him. A quiver passed over the audience; at last the truth of the murder would be revealed. The choking cries gave place to wild gibberish, which his father, standing beside me, interpreted as the language of white men. Knife, less hysterical than he appeared, heard the old man's words, and, staring straight into my face, repeated his gibberish. *"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum,"* I answered immediately in the first words of Latin that came into my head; and *"pamakalawilinilitoolooka,"* or something like it, he responded in his gibberish. My Latin gave out, and I continued the conversation in French, fearing to use English lest Cockney might ruin the little drama by some false move. The impression on the audience was immense; their shaman really was inspired by a

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627 white man's spirit, for how else could he understand
787 and converse with me? So when he ceased his gibberish, and in broken syllables pronounced that it was a white man in a far distant country who had caused the young man's death, the faith that moves mountains was not stronger than their conviction of my innocence.

All this time Cockney had been viewing our antics with the greatest alarm. Knife held me hypnotized, he believed, and the tense faces of the audience turned in my direction made him dread some untoward incident. He dared not abandon me to my peril while he warned our companions at the house above. So he stood, like a vigilant sentry, prepared to leap to my rescue and battle against the overwhelming odds the moment the whistle sounded.

The séance lasted about two hours, and contained several minor incidents in which I played a leading rôle. Knife's audience was in the mood to credit any deception, and he was too shrewd to lose his opportunity. At one stage he led his first wife into the ring to execute a "white man's" reel, a kind of square dance they had learned at Great Bear Lake; and in his wild gibberish, made intelligible to me by signs, he bade me summon Cockney to join hands with the younger wife. The dance may not have been artistic, but it impressed the spectators more than ever with the wondrous knowledge of their medicine-man, who could both

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speak the white man's language and perform his intricate dances.

The performance ended at last, and the people began to disperse to their huts. Cockney, who was among the first to vanish, hastened to the station to describe my abnormal behaviour and organize a strong party that would bring me safely home. But before he had finished his narrative I myself arrived on the scene and offered a more reasonable explanation of my conduct.

The natives living out in the strait became very friendly again when the charge of murder was lifted from my head. I visited their settlement twice for periods of three or four days, staying each time with my old acquaintance, Ikpuck. The sun was now much higher in the sky, and a mildness in the atmosphere indicated the approach of spring. Snow-huts would soon be untenable; the slight melting of their ceilings around noon had already caused some of the people to move into large tents made of caribou skins. With the advent of longer days the hunters captured more seals, and the women were packing the surplus blubber into large bags to cache on the coast until autumn. Everything seemed to be changing. The various bands that had united in midwinter were separating out again and moving to different sealing-grounds; and every fortnight, as the new sealing-grounds became exhausted, they moved their settlements forward a few more miles.

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few more miles. Even the little children had work to do, for this harvest season would last only until May, when the breaking up of the sea-ice would drive the natives from their sealing to fish and hunt caribou on the land.

It was time now to decide what my own movements should be during the summer months, and I suggested to Ikpuck that I might join his train to Victoria Island, taking my own outfit. The old man was delighted with the plan, and, having no children of his own, formally adopted me into his family, which consisted of himself and his wife Icehouse, Sculpin or Jennie, Icehouse's daughter by a former marriage, and an adopted nephew named Knife-Blade. The Runner, a married son of Icehouse, intended to join the party; probably also two or three families of near kinsmen. The entire band would assemble on the ice within the next three or four weeks, when Ikpuck would send word to me at the station. In the meantime I could travel east with Cox, who needed a companion and a dog-team for surveying a portion of the coast-line.

The short trip with Cox was a pleasant change from constant association with the Eskimos; it was like moving from one world into another. Yet we could not avoid the natives entirely. Two families were hunting large bearded seals in a bay a few miles east of our station, and a small band had camped near Cape

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Krusenstern to intercept the herds of caribou that were now migrating northward from their winter home on the Barren Lands. Both these camps we passed without stopping, glad that the few logs of driftwood along the coast made it necessary to seek their blubber-lamps for drying our boots and mittens. The wood petered out just beyond Cape Krusenstern, and we did lodge one night in a native's tent; but when Cox tried to take observations outside for latityde and longitude, his sextant and artificial horizon attracted so many curious observers that he seldom caught a glimpse of the sun. The long-suffering topographer finally became so ruffled that we hastily left the settlement and camped seven miles away beside a large log of cottonwood that provided enough fuel for three days.

Hardly had we pitched our tent when a sled appeared coming up from the south. The travellers were Anderson and Castel, returning from their unsuccessful attempt to reach Fort Norman. With infinite labour they had struggled through deep snow from the valley of the Coppermine to Dease River. There Anderson had expected to find white men, or at least Indians working for them, who would carry the mail to Fort Norman before the ice broke up; but the country was deserted. The winter was then so advanced that if he pushed on to Fort Norman he could not return to Bernard Harbour in time to organize our scientific work for the spring and summer. He

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decided, therefore, to turn back and forward the mail by ship when the season for navigation arrived.

With the extra man and dog-team now available, Cox no longer required my assistance in his topographical work; so we returned to the station with Anderson to arrange the programs for the next seven months. Cox intended to complete the map of the coast-line to the mouth of the Rae River, then, ascending the river to its source, cross overland to Bernard Harbour. Chipman and O'Neill would finish their survey of the western coast-line to Darnley Bay; afterward they would continue Cox's survey, extending it from the mouth of the Rae River to the eastern end of Coronation Gulf, where Cox and Anderson would join them in our schooner, the *North Star,* as soon as the ice broke up. Anderson and Johansen were to carry on biological and zoological work at the station during the spring, and Johansen would remain there all summer after Anderson went eastward. I myself proposed to join the Eskimos going to Victoria Island, and return to Bernard Harbour when the sea froze over again in November. Each man worked out his own plans to harmonize with the rest, and Anderson, with full confidence in his staff, approved them all without question, seeking only ways and means to furnish the necessary equipment.

My "father" Ikpuck arrived four days later to guide me to his settlement, which had been moved twice dur-

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ing my brief absence. It was now mid-April, and the natives were travelling in easy stages toward the land, allowing a few days between each migration for the women and children to freight forward the pokes of blubber and the men to resume their sealing. All the families had adopted skin tents in place of snow-houses, or, if their tents were still cached on the coast, they roofed circular walls of snow with the skins of caribou and musk-oxen. The camp was mottled with clothing, suspended from sticks, to dry in the warm sun; and at every little snow-flurry the women rushed from the tents to beat the light flakes from each garment before they melted and spoiled the fur. Night and day had merged into one another, the sun disappearing for one hour only at midnight; and the temperature remained fairly constant around 15°F., except at noon, when it mounted at times to the freezing-point.

The younger women, who were as well versed as the men in the peculiar habits of the seal, often went out with the hunters to escape the monotonous care of clothes and blubber. Each seal appeared to have its special territory, like a bird in the nesting season; and every half-hour or so it came to the surface to breathe. In summer, with open water all around, it rose at any place; but when the sea froze in the autumn it could reach the atmosphere only by breaking through the thin sheet of ice that covered its domain. The breathing-holes made at that season remained open

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225 all winter, for the snow that drifted over them,
136 mantling the whole ice-field, kept them from freezing beyond the power of the animal to break through at its next visit. The seal then remained in this territory, making irregular circuits from one hole to another.

225 The Eskimo adjusted his hunting to the animal's habits. When his well-trained dog, nosing over the surface, scented the taint of a seal-hole and vigorously scratched up the snow, he drove it back and himself cleared out the cavity with a small scoop. Then from the back of his coat he brought forth an "indicator," a thin stick of bone that resembled a knitting-needle with a small disc near the lower end. He arranged this to float upright in the water, and adjusted the snow around the top until the opening was scarcely visible. Everything was now ready, and, harpoon in hand, he crouched on the lee side of the hole to await his quarry. Sometimes it appeared within a few minutes; sometimes, when it was visiting other holes in the circuit, not for several hours. But when the indicator bobbed rapidly up and down with the air-bubbles he knew that the seal was rising to the surface; and when the indicator jerked suddenly upward he drove his harpoon down through the centre of the hole and clung to the line with all his might.

123 The days passed pleasantly by. As a member of Ikpuck's household I occupied one edge of his sleeping-platform and stored my supplies on the snow wall

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that encircled his tent. My dogs made friends with his dogs, and shared the same home in the passageway. Jennie, my eleven-year-old "sister," took charge of them during migrations while I hauled on the big sled with Ikpuck. The other families in the band considered me a guest of distinction and welcomed me into their homes. So little by little civilization slipped from me and I settled down to the routine of Eskimo life.

Ikpuck asked me one morning to accompany him westward to bring back some caribou fat he had cached on the coast the previous summer. I understood that the whole trip would occupy only two or three days; but, to avoid all risks, I put together provisions for four. We started out the same morning, Ikpuck running ahead of the sled to give the course. By evening we had travelled over twenty-five miles, and were still as far out from shore as when we started. I discovered then the actual length of the journey; it would take two or three days merely to reach the cache, and at least the same number to return.

We covered about thirty miles the next day and camped behind Cape Kendall, on Victoria Island. Ikpuck remarked as we turned into our sleeping-bags that we should reach the cache in the morning, and return to our camp at night. After tossing restlessly in bed for several hours from the pain of snow-blindness—for travelling through broken ice causes a heavy

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484 strain on the eyes, particularly when the weather is foggy—I fell at last into a sound sleep and did not awaken until 7 o'clock in the morning. Ikpuck had disappeared, even the dogs and sled were gone. I was alone in an empty snow-hut, without food and crippled with snow-blindness, eighty miles from Bernard Harbour. The thought flashed through my mind that Ikpuck had deliberately abandoned me to gain possession of my outfit, and, stumbling outside, I followed his tracks for a few yards; but they led to the westward, in the direction, not of his settlement, but of the cache. I entered the house again, and, looking around, saw in a corner some rice that had been left over from our supper, and a piece of frozen seal meat that Ikpuck had brought in from the sled before he departed. Then I felt ashamed of my suspicions. The faithful old man had left me to sleep while he went on alone to his cache; and he would join me again within a few hours.

I lay all day in my sleeping-bag, shielding my eyes from the light; and the inflammation abated so rapidly with the darkness and rest that I could probably travel the next day without much discomfort. Ikpuck appeared late in the evening, his sled loaded up to the handle-bars with caribou fat. A broad smile lit up his face as he spoke of the trick he had played me. "You were tired last night," he said, "and your eyes were bloodshot and painful. I should have returned much

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earlier, but the dogs were troublesome and the load heavier than I anticipated." 123 484

I questioned him about his route, for the two maps on which I relied, that of Rae, the Arctic explorer, and the chart of the British Admiralty, disagreed concerning this part of the coast. The chart had a deep inlet behind Cape Kendall which did not appear on Rae's map, while Rae (who named the cape Point Pullen) showed an island to the westward that was missing on the chart. Ikpuck's explanation, and my own observations later in the summer, revealed a land-locked bay that nearly severed Cape Kendall from the mainland; in portaging across the isthmus instead of following the coast, Ikpuck had shortened his journey by several miles. West of the point a long sandbar stretched out toward a high, rocky islet that harboured the remains of an ancient settlement. Both maps, then, were right; the full truth lay in combining them.

Our load of caribou fat was indeed heavy, for it had been lying in a cache eight months. It weighted not only the sled, but the surrounding atmosphere. I kept to windward of it, or well in front of the dogs, but distance seemed to make no appreciable difference. Ikpuck, on the contrary, sniffed the air with satisfaction, and nibbled small pieces of the fat as we marched along. When the provisions we had brought gave out that evening it furnished him both breakfast and supper. [251] [262]

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supper. Only thirst distressed him, for we had exhausted the oil in our primus lamp and had no means of melting ice or snow. Fortunately, thirty-six hours later, we came upon a settlement of four snow-huts occupied by some Eskimos who were migrating to the mainland, and were able to slake our thirst from their cooking-pots. These natives, too, seemed to regard our caribou fat as an unusual luxury; but I myself derived more enjoyment from the juicy meat of a freshly killed seal.

The distance from this settlement to our own was only about fifteen miles, which we expected to cover easily in one day; but a heavy fall of snow at night obliterated all the trails, and the dense fog that succeeded hid from view everything beyond the leading dog. We wandered from early morning until late in the evening vainly searching for the tents, and at last, giving up all hope, built a small snow-hut and turned into our sleeping-bags. I filled a cup with snow to thaw out against my body, and realized, as never before, how much heat is required to melt a little snow, and how much snow to yield one teaspoonful of water.

The fog dispersed before morning, and we discovered the settlement a mile and a half to our left. An hour later Icehouse was distributing the caribou fat among the enthusiastic villagers, while Ikpuck and I, resting on the sleeping-platform, regaled ourselves

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with seal meat and hot tea. So ended our little journey, which began as a pleasant excursion, but developed, for me at least, into a rather toilsome march. Ikpuck was more accustomed to such vicissitudes, and thought the incident hardly worth mentioning.

We lingered a fortnight longer on the sea-ice, revelling in the mild weather of the Arctic spring. Day and night were hardly distinguishable, for the end of April saw the midnight sun. It mattered little whether we retired to our sleeping-bags at midnight or at noon; the night hours were preferable for travelling, because by 7 P.M. the melting slush of noon began to freeze again and the heavily laden sleds glided along more easily. When the days were warm and sunny a few seals emerged from their holes to bask on the surface of the ice, and in clear weather one or two herds of caribou marched steadily past us toward Victoria Island.

Slowly we too moved northward, travelling about twelve miles at a time, then halting for a week to allow the hunters to capture a few more seals, and their wives to accumulate more blubber. During one of these journeys my companions discovered a seal-hole covered as usual by the crust of snow. I thought it was nothing but the ordinary breathing-hole, about a foot in diameter, leading down to the water, and was lingering beside my sled, when Ikpuck called me over to examine it. Burrowed out in the snow alongside the

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LENGTHENING DAYS

The Eskimos, who were greatly amused at my ignorance of everything pertaining to sealing, now scored another laugh at my expense. As we gazed down into the seal-hole one of them asked me whether I intended to drink from it. The joke seemed so obvious that I answered rather casually, "No. I do not care to drink salt sea-water." But the men around me smiled, and my questioner, kneeling down, scooped up a handful of slush ice that was floating on the surface, let it drain through his fingers for a moment, and swallowed it with gusto. Still doubting, I tested the ice myself; it was perfectly fresh, being simply the pure snow above converted into slush when it fell into the water.

The only hardship we suffered on these journeys was thirst, caused by the want of liquids in our diet. We breakfasted on cold boiled seal meat left over from our supper, dragged the heavy sleds from ten to fifteen miles, and re-erected the cumbersome tents at the conclusion of the march; then, when the day's work was ended, we sat down to our second meal, and received from the cooking-pot another ration of seal meat. No fruit, no vegetables; morning and night nothing but seal meat washed down with ice-cold water or hot broth. The pot of tea I made as soon as the tents were erected gave little relief to so many parched throats. One man drank two large cups of soup, two of tea, and nine of ice-cold water, all within the space

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low; but the hills are brown and barren, or sparsely clothed with a few creeping plants such as dryads, saxifrages, and oxytropi.

On this peninsula I planned to live six months, isolated with my little band of Eskimos. The life on the ice was ended; fishing and caribou-hunting were to be our sole pursuits. As Ikpuck's adopted son I could observe all the details of Eskimo summer life, following its variations from day to day as no traveller had done before me. It was for this purpose, indeed, that I had cut myself adrift from the rest of the expedition until the winter, when the strait would freeze over again and allow me to return to Bernard Harbour. In the back of my mind lay also another plan. Sixty miles to the northward was Prince Albert Sound, the home of an Eskimo tribe that I had not yet visited. Each summer a few of the Sound people met and traded with Eskimos from Dolphin and Union Strait somewhere in the interior of Wollaston Land, and Ikpuck, who was born in this region, promised to guide our party to their usual places of rendezvous. He arranged that we should travel first to the Lake of Dancing within the Colville Hills; later, if necessary, to the Big Lake across the divide or to Prince Albert Sound itself.

We had landed near Okowyarvik Creek, which flows into a long, narrow harbour sheltered from every gale by an island that extends across its mouth. It was the

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fine trout out of the lake, and but a short time afterward the children were scurrying from tent to tent with steaming messes of boiled fish.

I lay back among the caribou skins after supper, using my sleeping-bag for a cushion, and listened to Ikpuck's account of our day's adventures. A careless movement of my foot upset a tea-cup, emptying its contents onto one of our best robes. Icehouse sprang up indignantly. "You miserable wretch!" she exclaimed. "Do you think you are lying on sealskins? See what you have done. You have ruined our best robe." I cast an apologetic look at Ikpuck, who sat in the opposite corner. A faint smile flickered over his face, and his left eye gave a perceptible wink. Poor Ikpuck. Icehouse intercepted the wink, and, transferring her wrath, heatedly upbraided him for his indifference, while the old man silently hung his head. But her anger gave way to laughter as she helped me to scoop up the tea, and the incident became only a standing joke within our family circle.

We remained at the lake for several days, dividing our time between hunting and fishing. I was not familiar with their method of fishing and had better luck with the caribou. The Eskimos could stalk more skilfully, but my Ross rifle with its powerful copper-nosed bullets was more effective than Ikpuck's .44 Winchester, The Runner's .22, and the bows and arrows that made up the rest of our armament. So

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224 411 123 they were always well pleased when I joined the hunting excursions.

221 224 226 237 123 Yet my "parents" were not satisfied. They wished me to become expert in fishing also. The caribou migration was almost ended; soon the herds would scatter far and wide, and fish alone be our mainstay until midsummer. Icehouse made a bag of sealskin to hold all the trout and salmon I would surely catch, and Ikpuck overhauled my fishing-line, fitting it with a barbless hook and bone sinker like his own. Then he wound it over a short stick notched at both ends, gathered up his own equipment, and invited me to my first lesson.

226 123 [325] I have a vivid recollection of that lesson. We went out on the lake before noon, and with a chisel of native copper lashed to the end of a stout pole Ikpuck proceeded to dig a hole through the six-foot covering of ice. In twenty minutes he reached the water, making a hole fifteen inches in diameter at the top, four inches at the bottom. He then lowered his line until it touched bottom, rewound it about a foot, and began a rhythmical jigging.

"Take my chisel and make another hole for yourself," he said. Nothing seemed easier. I moved about twenty paces away and dug steadily for half an hour, but always there was more ice at the bottom of the hole. Ikpuck, who already had two trout on the ice beside him, looked over and laughed. "Come and

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fish here," he called. "I will finish the hole for you." 226
We changed places, and I dropped my line into the 123
water. Presently I hooked a fish, which I hauled up eagerly, hand over hand, as I had often done in boyhood; but it slipped off during a momentary pause in the strain, for the hook was barbless. Afterward Ikpuck taught me his own method of pulling in the line, and the reason for the barbless hook. He used, not his hands, but his wrists, rotating them alternately against the cord so that the strain remained constant. A barb was not only unnecessary, but a disadvantage, because, in jigging, a fish is caught in the lip where the flesh is tender, and a barbed hook often tears loose where a barbless hook holds firm.

For an hour we had no more bites, so we crossed some ridges and dug new holes in another lake, two miles away. Here the light breeze of the morning sud- [132]
denly increased to a violent gale. Ikpuck, considering it part of the day's routine, sat on a snow-block with his back to the driving snow and jigged his line as patiently as in calm summer weather. I perforce did likewise, though my feet seemed to grow colder and more solid than the ice beneath. We returned to camp at last with five trout and two salmon, one from my hook, all the rest from Ikpuck's. But the lesson he gave me bore fruit, for within a month I could dig my own holes and catch as many fish as my companions.

Two short moves from this lake brought us to the 133
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her voice. During brief lulls she complained to Ikpuck that the dogs were keeping his "son" awake. He merely rolled over in his bag and growled sleepily.

She sympathized with me the next day. "Grandfather was incorrigible last night, my adopted son. Did you hear him?" "Yes, Icehouse," I answered. "And I dreamed I heard your voice also. Were you talking?" The old lady laughed merrily. She dearly loved a joke, even at her own expense.

When the storm died away in the early morning Leaf left her shelter to seek some frozen caribou meat for breakfast. Far out on the lake she saw black specks in motion, and borrowed my binoculars to examine them. Her excited shout, "The Tormiat are coming, the Tormiat are coming," awakened the whole camp. We dressed in haste. Jennie, my little "sister," ran forward to meet them and assure them that we were friendly, while the rest of us lined up on the bank overlooking the lake to accord them a formal welcome.

The party drew nearer, and we distinguished two men and one woman, the latter carrying a small baby on her back. Cries of disappointment arose; instead of the thirty or forty visitors we had been expecting, here was only one family. True, a second family arrived a few hours later, but all the other Tormiat had gone far to the north-east, whither it was now impossible to follow them by sled. The wave of disappointment passed quickly, and every one was cheer-

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and party until the official program came to an end. Some of the more elderly natives, wearied with the eight hours' continuous performance, then retired to rest; but the younger kept up the dancing until early morning.

During the two days that followed, gossip and barter divided the hours with informal dances. Our visitors watched me furtively. Only one white man had crossed their lives before, and even he had vanished before they knew him intimately, or could assure themselves that he really came from that far-distant corner of the earth where a great pole props up the sky. They remembered the legend which said that Eskimos, Indians, and white men were originally brothers, their mother a beautiful woman who rejected every suitor until her father's dog, metamorphosed into a handsome young man, visited her and won her love. She herself went down to the ocean floor to preside over the waves, the fish, and the sea mammals; but her children scattered in all directions. Only the Eskimos remained human; the Indians kept their human forms, but became like wild beasts at heart; and the white men degenerated into monsters even in outward appearance.

So the Tormiat followed all my movements with the utmost curiosity. They still thought their legend partly true, and waited expectantly for evidence of my "monstrosity." Icehouse herself, my adopted mother,

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829 had scarcely outgrown the same beliefs. She asked more than one strange question about my people. "Was it true that some white men have arms that trail almost to the ground? Did my real mother have hair on her head like Eskimo women?" Not until I had lived with her family for six months, never leaving them for a single day, did she announce as a magnificent discovery, "You white men are just like ourselves." Even then she committed herself to no opinion concerning the "humanity" of white women!

574 The two tribes, having left most of their property
533 at the coast, had little to exchange except songs. A quartet practised inside my tent each evening, Ikpuck and Icehouse teaching the new songs from Dolphin and Union Strait and learning the latest compositions
574 of the Tormiat. Every one was happy until Ikpuck's
837 handsome face struck a responsive chord in the heart of the leading Tormiat woman. She dared not reveal her inclinations while her husband sat by her side, but on the third evening, when he was unexpectedly called from the tent, she leaned forward, ignoring Icehouse and myself, pressed her nose to Ikpuck's and, drawing back, coyly awaited his response. But Ikpuck sat like a graven image, making no sign; and Icehouse veiled her anger under a wan smile. There was silence for an interval. Then footsteps crunched in the snow outside, and the woman, pushing aside the door of the tent, disappeared hastily.

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IN QUEST OF THE TORMIAT

Angmaloktok, the "Ever-Frozen," is one of the largest lakes within the Colville Hills. Its minimum diameter is about four miles, and the ice that covers its surface seldom vanishes even in the warmest summers. We entered a bay at its northern end, and while the Eskimos lingered to fish, I climbed a neighbouring hill to examine the country-side. North, south, east, and west, as far as the eye could see, stretched a wilderness of frozen lakes and barren ridges. No tree, no mountain, nothing to arrest the gaze except the black, ant-like forms of men and dogs moving about in the bay below. The sun, floating in a cloudless sky, cast no shadow to relieve the desolate monotony. So depressing was the landscape that I descended the hill and, without waiting to fish, started the train in motion again.

Ikpuck, as usual, headed the procession across the lake, and I followed him closely with my sled. One of my dogs, lamed in a recent fight, ran free, but Parted-Hair, who was travelling behind me, hitched it to the sled on which his wife and step-son were riding. I halted until he came up to me, quietly released the dog, and continued on my way. Parted-Hair was annoyed. He thought he could safely defy me among his people, and seized the dog again; and again I set it free without a remark. Another mile we traversed in silence; then, for the third time, he hitched the dog to his sled and refused to let it go, even though Ikpuck himself

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484 shouted a remonstrance. Parted-Hair was the stronger
• 123 physically, but I held the winning card in this land where might is the only arbiter; he carried only a bow and arrows, while I had a rifle on my sled. I slung it over my shoulder, told Ikpuck to hold to his course, and waited for Parted-Hair and his sled. My action, of course, was sheer bluff; if nothing happened before he came up I intended no more than to cut the traces of all his dog-team. But to the natives, accustomed to the blood-feud, it meant certain death to my adversary, and they shouted a simultaneous warning. Parted-Hair liberated the dog in an instant, slunk to the back of his sled, and kept well in the rear of the caravan during the remainder of the march.

123 After we reached the Lake of Dancing that evening my companions held an indignation meeting outside my tent, and severely rebuked Parted-Hair for his arrogant behaviour. Presently his wife, pushing open the door, offered me a large trout; but I declined the peace-offering in order to magnify the gravity of his offence. She returned the next day with another trout, which I accepted, sending her away with the shoulder of a caribou I had just killed. This closed the incident. But Parted-Hair's attitude toward me changed; he became more respectful in his manner, and amply atoned for his previous conduct by many gratuitous services.

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Our party split up each morning and drifted in different directions, each person carrying a fishing outfit, and the men their hunting weapons. Nine or ten hours later the women straggled back with their fish, bearing also, in fine weather, loads of dryads to cook the evening meal. They cut off the heads of the fish for the cooking-pots, threw the backbones and fins to the dogs, and spread the bodies on boulders, or across horizontal poles to dry in the sun. The whole party then reassembled an hour or two before midnight, and, squatting outside the tents, gnawed the fish-heads, bone by bone, and discussed the day's adventures. The hungry dogs looked on with mournful eyes; tied to stones, they dined miserably on bones and broth.

I hunted, most of this period, to obtain caribou meat for my starving dog-team, but during a fortnight's steady tramping saw but two young bulls, which we consumed entirely in three days. The stony ridges cut to pieces my light sealskin boots, intended only for soft snow, and Icehouse, who had tried to patch them each evening, finally rebelled. "Stop hunting for a time," she said. "Your boots are wrecked beyond repair, and caribou will be scarce until the warmer weather comes and the mosquitoes drive them near our camps. Stop hunting, and I will make you new boots with stouter soles for the summer months."

It was not only my boots that troubled her. She believed that an evil demon, haunting the hills to the

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westward where I generally made my excursions, trapped and destroyed the solitary hunter. In this very district, many years before, it had spirited away her first husband, who had vanished without leaving a trace. So when I, too, vanished for sixteen hours one day she became greatly alarmed, and entreated Ikpuck to lead a searching party. Willy-nilly, I had to join the fishermen and let my dogs go hungry.

The fish soon commenced to bite less freely in the surrounding lakes, and some of the men wandered farther afield. Ikpuck then shot a caribou eight miles away near the shore of Lake Ever-Frozen. Instead of packing it home, he buried it in the snow and advised moving our camp to its vicinity. Every one welcomed his suggestion and prepared back-packs for the dogs, since the melting of the snow on the ridges rendered our sleds useless until autumn came round again. We concealed in stone cairns the dried fish we had accumulated, raised the empty sleds on stone pillars, and piled on top of them all the stone lamps and other articles too heavy or too bulky to carry around with us during the summer; then, packing on our backs the remainder of the equipment, we abandoned the Lake of Dancing and marched away to our new home.

It was a picturesque sight, this train of people and dogs staggering over hill and lake under burdens almost equal in size and weight to themselves. The men carried the tents and weapons, the women the

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223 291 place. Despite Icehouse's loud remonstrances, despite the laughter of the rest of us, he raced for the pool again, the long tail alternately flapping between his naked legs and streaming in the air behind him. And again the ice gave way beneath him! Chilled to the bone, and thoroughly crestfallen, he hastened to the shore, and in a surly voice bade Icehouse unfasten the packs and set up the tent.

221 361 226 Our jigging in this corner of Lake Ever-Frozen was very productive for a week, and the new camp with its lines of drying fish among the dogs and tents soon became a replica of the one we had just abandoned. To stand on the ice hour after hour and mechanically vibrate a long line in the clear water below was a pleasantly monotonous occupation when the air was mild and the sunlight sparkled in the crystalline snow. [132] Even when fogs rolled down on us, and only the dark water-holes at our feet relieved the whiteness all around, there was a comfortable peace in the atmosphere and in the mellowed voices that penetrated from 224 somewhere unseen. The life was in fact too tranquil, too monotonous, for The Runner and his wife. They craved more activity, and spoke of hunting for caribou [123] to the northward; and when they broached their project to me I rashly promised to accompany them.

We set out on a clear, bright morning and travelled from one ridge to another, pausing on each crest to search the surrounding country. No caribou were

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224
[251] of which we shot. The heads and limbs we buried
[482] in the snow to collect the following day; The Runner took one of the carcasses on his back, I took the other,
[593] and Leaf carried the two hares. After we had proceeded thus for about a mile The Runner changed burdens with his wife, who accepted without a mur-
[123] mur. I promptly changed with him, and a few minutes after with Leaf again, giving her back the hares. But packing was still a new experience to me, and though I reached the camp without mishap, I deeply rued my gallantry the next morning when a thousand pains shot through my neck every time I turned my head.

221 A fortnight's fishing exhausted the bay and com-
226 pelled us to make another move. It mattered little
361 which way we turned, for every ridge bounded a lake that contained both trout and salmon. But since the total catch would be greater if we scattered our forces and settled on different lakes the families separated. The Listener went south, The Chatterbox north, Parted-Hair north-east, and Ikpuck and The Runner east.

221 This dispersal of the individual families completed
361 one half of the strange cycle through which the Eskimos passed year after year. They reacted to the seasons, to their constantly changing environment, more than most of the inhabitants of our globe. The problem of obtaining life's basic needs, food, clothing, and shelter, left little time for other thoughts; and the seals and caribou that furnished them with food, fur-

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of my companions seemed proof against every outrage, but my own rebelled. An insidious dysentery attacked me, making me at last so weak that I could hardly drag myself to the fishing-ground. My throat became dry like parchment, and drinking the clear water in the fishing-holes merely aggravated the dysentery without relieving the thirst. Altogether my predicament was rather alarming.

No parents could have been kinder to me at this time than were Ikpuck and Icehouse. Believing that all disease had a supernatural origin, Icehouse tried to exorcise the agencies responsible for my ill-health. That she failed to cure me distressed but did not surprise her, for, as she herself remarked, Eskimo remedies had no efficacy with white men. She showed her sympathy in a more practical manner by giving me the choicest morsels of fish, and by foraging far and wide for dryads in order to cook more frequently. Yet in spite of all her efforts my health failed to improve, and at last I sent The Runner to the Lake of Dancing to bring me a few ounces of malted milk and three pounds of dog-pemmican that I had stored there in a cache. The malted milk lasted me two days, after which I began on the pemmican, prepared forty years earlier for the fur posts of the Hudson's Bay Trading Company. It was brown with antiquity, and consisted merely of dried beef crushed to powder, with here and there fragments of bones; but mixed

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into a paste with cold water it was more digestible than the half-raw fish on the drying-poles, and more palatable than saltless fish boiled over a smoky flame in a cupful of water. So for a week I ate nothing but pemmican. Gradually the dysentery lessened, my strength began to return, and, though the intolerable thirst continued, there was hope of a permanent recovery if in some way we could improve our diet.

I talked the matter over with Ikpuck. He could understand my dislike of raw fish, but not its effect on my health, unless, indeed, my guardian spirit had forbidden its consumption. Yet he would gladly do anything to aid my recovery. It was the end of July; the fur of the caribou was in its prime, and the fishing season nearing its close. He had intended to pass the remainder of the summer wandering in the hills to the north-east, where caribou were numerous but fuel scarce; however, seeing that I might eat nothing but cooked food, we could move southward toward the coast if I wished, and travel over plains amply clothed with heather and willow. We agreed to adopt this second plan and communicated the decision to our companions.

A snow-storm, not an unusual occurrence even in the height of summer, delayed our departure a few days; but as soon as the snow melted again we packed all our fish to the Lake of Dancing and cached it with our other possessions. Then we turned southward, away

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summer the deep tanning of their skin masked its uncleanliness. It was easy to discover one reason for the peculiar atmosphere of an Eskimo throng. The odour was really a composite one, the smell of fur clothing mingling with the distinctively human odour that characterizes all races, but differs in each one. Neither Eskimo society nor our own ever discusses this topic, although Icehouse once confessed to me in private that her people had found the odour of the white man very disagreeable. However that may be, my bathing, being purely voluntary, certainly excited much interest, and when I stole away to the pool for the second bath, Ikpuck notified the whole party. Innocently devoid of clothes, I was disporting gaily in the water when the sound of voices made me look up. Men, women, and children lined the bank above me, intently watching the exhibition. None of them knew how to swim, or even that it was possible, and they gasped with admiration when I dived out of sight and reappeared a few yards away. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* Ikpuck, The Runner, and even the latter's wife stripped off their clothes immediately and joined me in the water, eager to receive a first lesson in the newly discovered art.

We were now so close to our caches on the coast that my companions decided to deposit there, before turning westward, the small quantity of dried fish they were carrying against emergencies. The visit enabled

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me to take from my own cache a little rice and pemmican, which, being more easily digested than boiled meat, would assist my return to health. The pemmican I carried on my back, but most of the rice I placed in the pack of my largest dog, who ruined it a few hours later by plunging headlong into a deep pool. During the two days immediately following we secured no game of any kind, so that I was driven to share the pemmican with my companions. Hungry as they were, I could hardly induce them to touch it, although they would have killed without compunction any fellow-countryman who attempted to hoard food when they were starving. I was different, they averred, and their ways were not my ways; deprived of my special food, I might be prostrated again by a return of my illness. Their children might eat a little, if I so desired, but as for themselves, they were accustomed to hunger, and would surely kill a caribou on the morrow, or, if not then, on the day following. In the end, however, they agreed to compromise, and divided up half my pemmican, leaving the other half for myself.

Our usual procedure at this time was to march from ten to fifteen miles, then to scatter out in search of game while the women pitched camp. Ikpuck, The Runner, and myself, going out together late one afternoon, discovered a large bull caribou grazing in the centre of an open plain where it would certainly detect us if we attempted to approach. In spite of this The

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a hunting-knife lashed to the end of a tent-pole. That had been a terrific battle, infinitely more thrilling than our recent chase, for what chance had the two bears against a .44 Winchester? But a bear is a bear, however it is slain, and the joy of my companions was not lessened because the danger had been slight. The species remained as formidable as ever, and its representatives, even when dead, should be treated with caution and respect. So the prudent Ikpuck placed a needle-case beside the mother, and a miniature bow and arrow beside the cub, that they might not travel empty-handed to the spirit-home of their kind.

We camped beside the carcass of the larger bear for three days, enjoying the change from venison to a heavier meat. The dogs, more starved than feasted during the last six months, gorged themselves until they could hardly move. We had meat enough to last a fortnight, yet the hunters wantonly shot three caribou, bringing in only the hides, the back fat, and the sinew. When I remonstrated against such wastefulness they merely said that caribou would always be plentiful, and that they wanted more hides to trade with their neighbours. There was one way in which I could check the slaughter, by threatening to supply no ammunition during the winter to any one who wasted the meat. The threat accomplished more than I had anticipated. They not only brought in one of the carcasses, but presented me with all the marrow-

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bones. More embarrassing still, Icehouse insisted on frying me the liver in back fat, as I had often done for myself; only instead of pounding the fat between two stones before she placed it in the pan, she made quite sure that it would melt by chewing it!

During our march south, Ikpuck and The Runner visited the coast to search for driftwood, returning with a fine plank that had probably washed overboard from some vessel. So unusual a prize led to considerable discussion. At first they proposed to convert it into two sled-runners, since it required less shaping than the rude logs they generally trimmed down for that purpose; but as both their sleds were in good condition they finally decided to make fish-spears, and Ikpuck split the plank carefully from end to end by means of small wedges of antler driven home with a heavy stone. He then split each section, obtaining four stout poles which he planed and smoothed with his hunting-knife. The care he expended on the task, and his manifest joy at its successful completion, made me realize the handicap under which these people laboured through the scarcity of wood in their country. If I may compare his fish-spears with a product of our own civilization, each pole had the value of a first-class magazine rifle.

All was well in our old camp at Bad Creek, where The Listener's wife had stayed to dry our meat; if anxiety or loneliness had troubled her during her nine days'

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few days, and only occasional stragglers appeared in the vicinity. Our comrades to the west, who wished to inspect their caches before returning to the hills, moved over and camped beside us. But the evening after their arrival Icehouse quarrelled with The Chatterbox's wife concerning some blubber that was given to the dogs, and, after exchanging real Billingsgate, reduced her adversary to tears. Ikpuck scolded her and retired to bed. The remainder of the party soon followed his example; but when Icehouse, lingering to the last, crept in beside her husband, he sternly ordered her to sleep in an empty sealskin tent that we used for a kitchen. She protested vehemently, for a cold north wind was blowing and the thermometer nearly at zero. At a repetition of the order she began to dress, but he tore the clothes from her hands and snapped, "Get out." The poor woman, speechless with terror, fled through the tent door naked, and disappeared into the darkness. I said to Ikpuck, "Tell her to come in again. She will freeze to death." He slipped on his jacket and looked inside the cooking-tent. It was empty, nor did he know where she had gone. Five minutes later I found her in the tent of Parted-Hair's family, shivering under a spare caribou robe; but when I urged her to return she answered, "Ikpuck is too angry with me. I am afraid." I assured her that she would suffer no harm, and, returning to my sleeping-bag, told Ikpuck to drop the

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matter. He pretended to be sound asleep when she stole in, and the camp relapsed into silence, except that now and then a low sob issued from the tent of The Chatterbox, who had disciplined his wife by tearing her coat from top to bottom. Icehouse was unusually quiet in the morning, and our visitors departed abruptly for the hills. So once more our tent stood solitary.

In order to protect ourselves more effectively from the weather we moved into the sealskin cooking-tent, built a low rampart of turf around its base, and covered the roof with caribou hides. The small lamp that Icehouse had discovered on a grave kept our new quarters comparatively snug, and its pale, warm glow streaming through the half-open door guided us home in the darkness from our weary hunts. The weather was stormier now, the nights much longer; in a few more weeks the sun would set for its midwinter sleep. This shortness of the daylight restricted our excursions, so that we added no more than two caribou to the total we had laid aside in our caches. Sometimes we did not go hunting at all, but kept watch in turn from the look-out post and scraped caribou hides inside the tent.. Icehouse made herself a pair of trousers from a skin that I scraped, and, rising at 2 A.M. a morning or two afterward, made a similar garment for me by the light of her blubber-lamp. So the days passed monotonously. At last Ikpuck decided that it

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nourished Icehouse wriggled in her bag for several minutes before she tumbled, like an enormous chrysalis, head foremost onto the floor.

We occupied a real snow-hut at the Lake of Dancing, one that had been erected by our companions a week or more before. Here we dismantled our caches of dried meat and dried fish, and recovered my sled, the big spring tent, and all the other things we had deposited at this place in the early days of summer. Foxes, worming their way through sundry chinks and crevices in the stones, had destroyed all the sinew fishing-lines; fortunately we had plenty of cod-line that could take its place. More serious was the destruction of the white-bellied caribou hides from which Icehouse had intended to make some finely ornamented costumes for the winter dances; but I assuaged her grief by promising to purchase other hides for her when the tribes reassembled at the sealing-grounds. We sighted one of the marauding foxes near our camp, and lured it within range by squeaking like a young bird; but Ikpuck's bullet struck only the ground between its legs, and, though deluged with snow, it escaped without injury.

After fishing in various lakes for a few days with little success we overtook our companions at the source of a creek that flows into Dryad Harbour. They had abandoned all further hunting and fishing on the land under the pressure of colder weather and were return-

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from some clothes that were packed in a bag on the house-roof. Jennie refused, and petulantly turned her face to the wall. Her cousin entered the hut, and, seeing his playmate sulking in the corner, jeered at her behind her back; but a backhand that neatly struck his eye changed his jeering to a wail. The indignant Icehouse poked her daughter with a stick until she, too, added her voice to the lamentable chorus. Partnership in grief then brought comfort to both children, who left the hut together and built a common playhouse in the snow outside. Pain alone could not make them weep so readily. I had seen Jennie stumble against a stone and bruise her knee so severely that she limped for two or three days; but when some one asked her if she were hurt she straightened up resentfully and marched ahead without a tear.

Even I grew restless at our inactivity. Bernard Harbour seemed so near across the strait, and for seven months I had heard no word of English, and received no news of my comrades on the expedition. In clear weather we could see the Liston and Sutton Islands on the horizon, and the station lay only twelve miles beyond. The dark streaks in the sky that reflected open water had disappeared, and a short excursion seaward revealed no wide cracks or unsafe places in the solid ice. Conditions might be different between the islands and the mainland, but Ikpuck thought that I could make the passage without danger.

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I would have left him with his family, but both he and Icehouse protested. When they adopted me as their son, they said, they had promised my comrades that they would deal with me honestly, and conduct me safely back at the end of our wanderings. How, then, could Ikpuck leave me before he had landed me at the station again and proved to the white men that he had kept his word? I could not resist their argument. My "father" and I left the settlement together on the morning of November 7, and, meeting with no mishaps in our passage, arrived at Bernard Harbour the next evening.

Thus was completed the project that I had outlined for myself the previous winter. By isolating myself among the Eskimos during the months just past I had followed their wanderings day by day from autumn round to autumn. I had observed their reactions to every season, the disbanding of the tribes and their reassembling, the migrations from sea to land and from land to sea, the diversion from sealing to hunting, hunting to fishing, fishing to hunting, and then to sealing again. All these changes caused by their economic environment I had seen and studied; now, with greater knowledge of the language, I could concentrate on other phases of their life and history.

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Eskimos from both sides of the strait, and from the Coppermine River area, flocked to the station to trade before the opening of the sealing season, until their new-born village on the edge of the ice contained nearly a hundred and fifty inhabitants. They remained with us for three weeks, giving no trouble, although we excluded all but Ikpuck's family from the house until nightfall. I tried, with Patsy's assistance, to delve into their religion and to record their ancient traditions; but privacy was impossible and fear of public disapproval sealed their lips. They spent their days in trading with me, or in visiting each other's huts and holding impromptu dances; then, after the white men had put away their note-books and retired to read in their bunks, they gathered around my phonograph and filled the house with song. Although the love of music is inborn, not taught, I had hoped that the sweetness of their voices would kindle an æsthetic glow in the cold, scientific breasts of my companions. But Cox leaped violently from his bed one midnight, and with neither sympathy nor ceremony expelled the belated choristers into the outer darkness.

All the chants they sang for me were either dance-songs or incantations to create fine weather. I asked them for lullabies; they responded with more dance-songs. The mother who rocked her baby to sleep on her back, under the warm fur coat, crooned the same melodies that she shouted in the dance-house to the booming of the drum.

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highest relief from the gloom and perils of the long Arctic night. Nature, when she condemned them to this twilight land, granted them the gift of song, and, however harsh their voices, their melodies revealed a deep sense of musical beauty. The example given below was transcribed unchanged from one of my phonograph records, and only the harmonies added to adapt it to the pianoforte.

The natives moved away at last to the Liston and Sutton Islands, whither Patsy and I followed them; but we returned to the station for Christmas, accompanied by Jennie and another child. Our party had grown from nine the previous winter to seventeen, half of whom were Eskimo assistants from the west. Mainly for their pleasure we set up a Christmas tree, filled their stockings with presents, and held sports in the snow outside the station house. Patsy contributed an unexpected item to the program of events. He carved the figure of a bird from a snow-block, and caused a stampede for shotguns and .22 rifles by abruptly announcing that a ptarmigan had settled at our door; three men levelled their guns at the dummy bird before the trick was discovered. With presents and games the fête succeeded gloriously, and the cook rounded it off with a Christmas dinner that included real mince pies and an enormous plum pudding. Through it all little Jennie and her playmate wandered about in a daze, neither comprehending our strange actions, nor the

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123 meaning of the flags and tinselled paper that covered the walls and tables of our hut. But when they opened their "stockings," filled to the brim with chocolate cakes, needles, thread, and enough cloth to make each of them a dress, their eyes nearly burst from their sockets and their joy pealed forth in uncontrollable laughter.

Guests are indispensable for a perfect Christmas, and ours, though unheralded, were none the less wel-
574 come. Two half-civilized Eskimos and their wives
437 from the hinterland of Hudson Bay, hearing that white men had settled in Dolphin and Union Strait, journeyed four hundred miles to visit us and to barter their furs for ammunition, tea, and tobacco. They arrived two days before Christmas, and left us the day following it to return to their country; but on Christmas evening they thanked us for our hospitality by holding a dance in the kitchen. The only drum we could muster was an aluminum frying-pan with a hard, penetrating note, which our visitors pounded nobly as they pranced round the room, chanting a monotonous refrain. Jennie and her companion thought the music rather strange, and seemed relieved when the concert ended. As for ourselves, while we greatly appreciated the goodwill of our guests, we kept the door wide open and expedited their retirement with a liberal present of tobacco.

225 After Christmas, Patsy and I returned to the Eski-

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mos at the Liston and Sutton Islands on a day when the calm weather had drawn every hunter out to the ice-field, even women and young boys. They were standing like pillars over their individual seal-holes, scarcely daring to raise their heads lest they should alarm the seals beneath. But one hunter, Big-Tooth, hailed us, and thinking that he might have harpooned a large bearded seal which he was unable to draw up alone, I sent Patsy ahead with the sled, and hastened to his assistance. As I drew near, however, he left the seal-hole and sauntered toward me.

"It's the white man," he called.

"Yes, Big-Tooth."

"I've had no luck with my sealing," he continued.

"Is that so?"

"Ikpuck has been very successful."

"That's good news."

"I'll search around a little longer before I go home."

"Very well. I'm going straight to the camp." With these words I moved away, but he called out again:

"By the way, have any of our eastern kinsmen arrived yet?"

"No, not yet," I answered, and moved on a few yards.

"By the way, I'll be going home soon."

"Oh, very well," I called without halting.

"By the way, if I catch a seal will you give me some cartridges for part of the meat?"

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"Perhaps."

"You can use it for dog-food, you know."

"Yes." And I continued on.

"By the way, I'm Big-Tooth, you know."

"Yes, Big-Tooth."

"By the way—". But I pretended not to hear him and hurried to overtake Patsy. Big-Tooth was a good fellow and deservedly popular; yet even his countrymen, whose own minds moved in constant circles round the material present, took to flight whenever he joined in a conversation.

On reaching the islands we erected a tent inside an unusually large snow-hut that opened into Ikpuck's dwelling. This was an admirable arrangement for two reasons; the hut gave us shelter from the wind, and the tent made it possible to set up a stove where we could burn some of the driftwood that lined the western beaches of the island. Here, with more privacy, we made another attempt to investigate the mythology and religion of the people. Ikpuck and Icehouse gladly told us all they knew, and though not well versed in the traditional lore of their people, they could direct us to better informants. We then closeted ourselves with two old men, whose hearts we warmed with some hard biscuits and cups of steaming chocolate. The comfortable tent and the unusual beverage loosened their tongues, and when one man

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gave place to incantations, and shaman after shaman sent forth his spirit to seek the dread sea-goddess at the bottom of the ocean and force her to relent. Temporary lulls in the storms drove every hunter to the sealing-grounds; on calm days they left the settlement two or three hours before dawn and returned in the darkness. As the dogs dragged the booty into the passageways the children threw themselves on the seal carcasses and poured water into their mouths to please their spirits and induce other seals to rise to the hunters' harpoons. Dolphin and Union Strait was one of the richest sealing-grounds along the Arctic coast, and the natives with whom we camped escaped any dire privations this winter; but in Coronation Gulf, as we learned afterward, many Eskimos ate the sealskin covers of their bows, and some old people perished through the hardships they were compelled to endure.

The storms were responsible for other tragedies. A boy of about six years, the only son of a strange, priest-like individual whom we knew as "The Prophet," was blown from the roof of a snow-hut during a gale, breaking his thigh just above the knee. The father, aided by an elderly medicine-man, set the leg in short splints bound round with a caribou hide. As soon as I heard of the accident I offered to take the lad to our station, where we would care for him

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until he could walk again; and the parents, who had often been our guests, gratefully accepted, on condition that the old medicine-man also gave his consent. When I asked them why they needed the medicine-man's permission they told me that he had undertaken to effect a cure, provided he were given the boy in payment; and that they had consented, much against their will, lest the child should be crippled for life. They requested the old man to release them from the engagement, but he refused, not unnaturally, perhaps, since he hoped that the boy would support him in his declining years; and the parents dared not go back on their word for fear of the old man's witchcraft. So the boy did not return with me, but remained in the settlement; and though his leg healed rapidly, his family lost him for ever.

Fate dealt less harshly with Fish-Head, a kindly old simpleton who harboured no ill-will toward any one. He had bought from me a .44 Winchester rifle, which he lashed inside a sealskin and stored at the back of his sleeping-platform. Knife, the shrewd medicine-man who had acquitted me of murder, told him that the weapon would rust inside the hut, and advised him to keep it on the parapet among the bales of clothing. Two nights after the old man changed its position the rifle disappeared. No one, of course, had stolen it; all the people accepted Knife's explanation,

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• 123 789 that the dogs had dragged it away in the darkness and the drifting snow had concealed it from sight. The distracted owner came to me: Could I not find it was the magic needle that spun round and round when I placed my knife beneath it, but at rest always pointed in the same direction? I listened to his story attentively, and promised that he should recover the [124] rifle before many days. That same evening I was visited by Knife, who also owned a .44 Winchester rifle, which I had agreed to replace with a more powerful 30.30 if he taught me the lore of his people. After mentioning Fish-Head's misfortune, I said: "You must be able to find his weapon, for you are the greatest medicine-man in this country. See that it is given back to him, for until it is found I can neither change your own rifle nor trade with any of your people." He protested vehemently against such an impossible task, and when I would not relent, departed in ill-humour. Nothing happened for two days; Knife kept aloof from me, and I abstained from all trade. Then one stormy morning an excited crowd broke into my tent, led by the triumphant Fish-Head. The rifle was found. Knife, the great medicine-man, had discovered it. He had gone out to shoot a raven that haunted the settlement, although the people had never thought of harming it before, and had come upon the rifle half buried in the snow. Knife himself stood

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grinning in the background. I congratulated him; he *was* a great medicine-man. And later I changed his own .44 rifle for a 30.30.

A woman who entered Ikpuck's hut about 4 A.M. one morning, announced that his half-niece had just given birth to a daughter. Icehouse dressed quickly and went over to visit the mother; but Ikpuck, after the first enquiries, paid no further attention. A boy would have augmented the ranks of the hunters; but a girl, well, she was only one more to support. I, too, gave the matter no thought, leaving at daybreak to return to the station. But the day following the newly delivered wife and her husband marched across the strait in the teeth of a blizzard and built a snow-hut beside us. The baby remained behind. It had come at an inopportune season when the parents were migrating to the eastward; so without a pang they had crushed out its little life and laid the body on the wind-swept snow.

Four other mothers destroyed their babes this winter within an hour of delivery. Terrible as their crime may seem, they should not be condemned too hastily. Every society has devised some method, conscious or unconscious, for checking the full and unrestricted growth of its population; and infanticide, the simplest of them all, was in past ages the most widely spread. Greece and Rome condoned it, and even

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CHAPTER XII

THROUGH BLIZZARDS TO SPRING

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A BURNING passion was inflaming the heart of The Runner, Icehouse's son. He craved for a Winchester rifle, like the .44 he had used so successfully against the polar bear; and he offered me anything he owned in exchange for one. If he could not earn it by teaching me the native traditions, of which he knew too little, he could at least guide me to the eastern natives, introduce me to them as his adopted brother, and in that way help my researches. His wife, Leaf, pleaded in his favour; but she made me promise, quite unnecessarily as it happened, that I would protect him from the wiles of the women in the

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Musk-ox land and restore him without delay, whole in body and untouched in heart. "Men are so foolish with women," she added, noting his tolerant smile.

Four of us, then, The Runner, Girling, Patsy, and myself, piled our belongings upon a sled and turned our faces eastward. Close to Locker Point, we reached a village of the Coppermine River natives, where signs of starvation confronted us on every side. The women, sheltered behind low walls of snow, were fishing for tom-cod to replace the seals their husbands could not catch; the lamps burned low in many of the huts, or were extinguished from lack of oil; and the hungry children gathered round our tent to beg for food. During the two days we stayed in their village we invited as many as we could to share our meals; but when they uncovered our sled in the darkness, broke into a box of hard biscuits, and emptied twenty-five pounds of rice into their mittens, we brushed the snow of their settlement from our shoes and resumed the interrupted march.

Our next stopping-place was a small settlement near the mouth of Tree River, a hundred miles farther east. The inhabitants turned out as usual to greet us, and after the first salutations, an elderly man, who appeared to be the leader of the band, invited us to enter his hut. There his daughter, a young woman about twenty years of age, was skilfully flensing a freshly killed seal. Her greasy clothes, dishevelled hair, gory arms, and

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face besmirched with blood and blubber from the tit-bits she slipped into her mouth, made a somewhat unattractive picture to our European eyes, though the Eskimos thought it charmingly homelike. But as soon as she finished her task she washed with snow, dried her face and hands with a ptarmigan skin, braided her hair, and changed into a neat suit of brown caribou fur adorned with red and white insertion. In this new setting she shone with quite a different radiance; for her face, though almost circular, was so regular, and her complexion so fresh and clear, that even the blue tattoo lines with which all the Eskimo women in this country marred their faces only added piquancy to her charms. If Girling had consented to carry out his missionary duties we would certainly have christened her the "Boreal Venus."

These natives had been in close contact with Anderson's party during the summer and regarded all white men with the greatest respect. When they learned that we intended to stay with them for a few days they renovated an empty hut for our use and equipped it with a stone lamp, which the women supplied with oil and tended night and morning. They, too, like the people we had just left, had suffered from starvation for several weeks; but now their hunters were killing more seals, and as the days lengthened they looked confidently forward to a season of plenty. Their leader and his wife almost embarrassed us with hospitality.

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574 We visited him every evening, listened to his adven-
• 123 tures at the sealing-ground, watched him re-enact each little drama inside the hut, and brandish his harpoon over imaginary seal-holes. His wife overhauled our clothing, and placed our hut on her distribution list for a daily ration of meat. Day or night, they welcomed us in their home like their own children, and—what gave us the most pleasure—looked for no recompense; indeed, they seemed quite surprised when at parting we offered them a few small gifts from our scanty store.

177 Several miles east of their settlement was a pyramid four feet square at the base and twelve feet high, built of flattish slabs of limestone and sandstone interspersed with boulders of diabase and granite. A vertical slab of limestone rather more than a foot long, that projected above a horizontal one three times that length, formed at the top a cross visible from a distance of three or four miles. The Runner told us that white travellers had constructed the monument long before he was born—Sir George Simpson's people, we discovered later, when they were weather-bound in this place in 1839. If they left any other record of their visit it was concealed inside the pyramid, which, of course, we did not dismantle; but wedged between two of the outer stones was a board from a biscuit box stamped "Canadian Arctic Expedition," with a date, "September, 1915," written in pencil underneath.

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Being sorely in need of kindling we carried away the board on our sled, and congratulated ourselves on not having to cut shavings of wet driftwood at the end of the day's march, when our fingers were always freezing from cold and exhaustion. The matter passed entirely from my memory, along with other trivial incidents of the journey, until it was mentioned at the station a few weeks later. Then the storm of indignation that burst over my head dumbfounded me. Whose, after all, was the greater vandalism? Mine to destroy with fire the record of my enterprising colleagues, or theirs to mar with an unseemly biscuit box the enduring monument of a gallant explorer?

From the monument we struck north-east until we came to a deserted village of forty snow-huts, representing a population of perhaps 140. The inhabitants had divided into two bands, one travelling north-east, the other north-west, to different sealing-grounds. We followed the latter's sled-trails, partly because they were more numerous, partly also to escape the east wind against which we had struggled all the way from Bernard Harbour. Not a soul was visible as we drove up to the new village through the driving snow; even the dogs, drowsing in the passageways, failed to notice our arrival. The Runner shouted and disappeared into the first hut, to emerge a moment later with a smiling youth whom he introduced to me as his brother. Then the dogs began to howl, people came tumbling out from

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574 all directions, and the whole band of the Musk-ox
123 tribe surrounded us, every household vying with the others in offering us hospitality. Girling went to one house, Patsy and I to another, and The Runner lodged with his brother.

602 This "brother" puzzled me. If Icehouse had only one son, as I had always understood, why did The [597] Runner call the man his brother? Of course, he might [601] be an adopted son like myself, but the Eskimos usually distinguished an adopted kinsman by adding a special suffix to the term of relationship. The mystery was [837] soon explained. A quarter of a century earlier Ice- [851] house's first husband had met the young man's father in this region and established a permanent relationship with him by a temporary exchange of wives. Although the youth was not born until three or four years afterward, The Runner considered him a true brother from whom he could claim all a brother's [123] rights and privileges; and I, though a stranger and a white man, was his adopted brother, with a similar claim to his friendship and help.

572 When the villagers gathered for a dance that eve-
574 ning The Runner found still another connection. A Musk-ox man and his wife hailed him as their "dancing-companion," declaring that he had filled that rôle for them many years before when they were visiting Dolphin and Union Strait. In virtue of this relationship they claimed the right to extend the village's

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Spring came suddenly about the middle of March, when the thermometer rose well above zero. Our station then became the Mecca for tribes from as far east as the Musk-ox people, who, like the nearer Eskimos, clamoured for trade goods, rifles, and ammunition. These were not the people I had visited three or four weeks previously, but kinsmen from the second camp a few miles farther east, who had lingered at their new sealing-ground until milder weather enabled them to undertake the long journey to Bernard Harbour without hardship. Their leader was a short, white-bearded medicine-man, brusque but always dignified in his movements, and with a shrewd, kindly face that attracted immediate attention. Undoubtedly he possessed great force of character, for his tribesmen reverenced him as a father and complied with all his wishes; nominally the Eskimos recognize no chiefs among themselves, considering every man the equal of every other.

The old man taught me some of his ancient lore, and even summoned a familiar spirit that I might record a shamanistic séance on the phonograph. His followers credited him with the most fantastic powers; he could fly through the air like a bird, go down into the ocean like a fish, see what was happening hundreds of miles away. But the old man never boasted of these things; they might be true, he said, and they might not, for he lost all consciousness of himself when the familiar spirits took possession of his body.

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spirits took possession of his body. We listened to their stories courteously but incredulously, for we had heard similar tales of other medicine-men; and when he quietly informed us one morning that something was wrong with our schooner, that the thing which made it go had broken during the night, we paid no attention. What could he know about the vessel or its engine, since he had never seen a schooner before, nor indeed any boat that moved under sails or power? Yet that same afternoon we discovered a serious crack in the rafter supporting the roof of our kitchen, and the rafter was the schooner's jib-boom! Was it merely coincidence, I wonder, or did the old man really possess some uncanny power of which we, for all our vaunted knowledge, were ignorant?

As the days grew longer and the air warmer, the harbour became more deserted. Cox and O'Neill had already gone eastward to continue their survey of the coast, Anderson and Chipman had gone west to examine the Crocker River, and Johansen was exploring the south coast of Victoria Island. The Musk-ox people returned to their home, and the local natives began to separate into small bands and move toward different hunting-grounds.

Suddenly a case of ammunition disappeared, and the handful of natives who lingered beside us disclaimed all knowledge of the theft. Our old friend Knife could have enlightened us, for he always kept abreast

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of any mischief that was afoot; but his lips appeared sealed. The affair clearly called for strategy. In the quiet of the evening Girling and I critically compared rifles until the inquisitive Knife, drawn more and more into the discussion, rushed off at last to bring his own Winchester for a similar inspection. With his rifle securely in our hands we sprang the trap; we would not return it until he informed. The rascal scarcely hesitated; he not only revealed the name of the thief, but offered to guide us to his camp, since the man had already moved away toward Victoria Island. Morning saw our new ally running ahead of the dog-team, setting the course, while Girling and I, armed with automatics, trotted steadily in the rear, gripping the handle-bars of the sled.

All the men in the thief's village were absent at the sealing-ground when we halted our team, and only women and children had charge of the camp. We ransacked his tent inside and out, amid voluble protests from the outraged wife, who planted herself in front of each bag and tried to prevent its examination; her outcries subsided into an uneasy muttering when we uncovered thirty small boxes of the missing cartridges. Unable to find the remaining twenty we decided to await the thief himself, and deposited his bow and arrows on our sled to aid his memory.

After some hours an old man appeared in the distance, preceded by two dogs dragging a seal. The

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women hurried forward in a body to warn him of the hold-up, but he sent them back to their tents and approached us with a friendly greeting. "Remain quietly beside your sled," he said. "I will intercept each hunter as he comes in and counsel him to put away his harpoon. If the men have only knives in their hands there will be less danger of violence."

We thanked him for the advice, and waited quietly while the hunters planted their weapons in the snow outside the tents and gathered beside us. By chance or good fortune the thief arrived last. We advanced to meet him, all except the worthy Knife, who prudently mounted the sled well away from the scene of action that he might shout and gesticulate in perfect safety. The thief stopped short in his tracks, a look of terror spread over his face, and he rushed toward his tent, expecting instant death. Intercepted on every side, he struggled desperately until his strength failed; then, amazed to find himself still unharmed, he calmed down and showed us the hiding-place of seven more boxes. The rest he had given to a Coppermine River native who had moved so far away that we thought it hardly worth our while to pursue him.

This issue of the matter satisfied everyone. The thief, who received back his bow and arrows, escaped more lightly perhaps than he deserved, certainly more lightly than if he had robbed his own countrymen. But

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there were mitigating circumstances that pleaded in his favour. We were foreigners in their land, beings partly of another world, who were blessed with many wonderful things that the Eskimos lacked. Though kindly enough after our own peculiar fashion, we neither observed their customs concerning the sharing of food with neighbours, nor assumed the other obligations of their semi-communistic life. If we thus claimed exemption from the only social code they knew, could we fairly expect them to observe their moral code toward us, and regard our property as inviolate? It speaks highly of their character that nearly all of them did observe it, and not only dealt with us honestly, but reproved those of their countrymen who deviated from the accepted path. We had come to this camp prepared for serious trouble, but the goodwill of its inhabitants, prudently directed by the old man, relieved the situation of all danger.

Spring was now fast advancing, the surface of the snow was beginning to thaw under the noon sun, and the night was almost as bright as the day. Girling considered that it was time for him to go back to his vessel a hundred and fifty miles to the west, that he might sail into Bernard Harbour and establish his mission there as soon as the ice broke up in the strait. I offered to escort him, since the interpreter and dog-team he had brought to our station during the winter had long since returned. The trip would be only a

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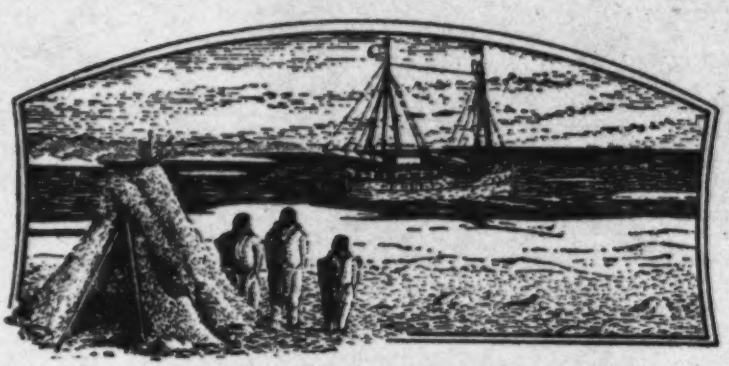

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAST DAYS

000 THE harbour ice broke up about the middle of June, and our schooner swayed once more to the gentle motion of the waves. Though the pack in the strait appeared still solid and immovable, a dark line across the sky indicated open water at no great distance, warning us to hasten the prepara-
126 tions for our departure. The house would remain to
114 serve Girling as a mission building, and some of our supplies were hardly worth freighting away; but there were natives to pay for their services, tents and equipment to store deep in the hold, and thousands of specimens, geological, biological, and ethnographic, to label and pack away in boxes, bags, and tins—any receptacle, in fact, that could be made to serve our needs.

• 123 Several families of Eskimos that fluctuated between
177 the station and a small fishing-creek four miles away garnered a rich harvest from our packing. They gath-

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ered up the empty gasolene cans to convert into cooking-pots, and scrap bars of iron to hammer into chisels and harpoon shafts. Sometimes they gleaned more widely than we desired, even carrying away two tarpaulins that covered a cache; but they surrendered these ill-gotten trophies with great good-humour. Many offered to help us for a trifling consideration, such as a half-dozen matches or an old, disused knife; but there were few tasks that lay within their power. To distract their attention from more serious matters we sent them to help Johansen, who was devoting every spare moment to augmenting his collections of the various plants and insects. So all one afternoon a stream of natives flowed steadily toward his tent, calling, "Matches, Johansen, matches," each individual holding out in payment a fly or a grub sadly crushed between thumb and forefinger. How many matches they obtained I cannot say; but since the biological collections underwent no increase, the experiment was not continued.

Ikpuck and his family, who were to keep watch over the station between the time of our departure and Girling's arrival, pitched their tent beside us for a short time before joining their countrymen at the fishing-creek. I visited him each day to talk over old times, and to observe his progress on the new steel runners that he was fitting to his sled. One evening Icehouse sent away the children and asked me to lie on

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my back with closed eyes, as she wished to interrogate my guardian spirit through the familiar process of head-lifting. She then passed her belt-cord under my head and summoned my spirit to answer her, testing the weight of my head for the answers. Both she and Ikpuck, who sat on the opposite side, appeared very solemn and spoke in hushed tones, so that I could not follow their conversation. Neither could I understand some of the questions she addressed to my "spirit," for she used many expressions confined to songs and religious ceremonies. Yet I realized that she was envisioning the future, when her white son would have gone far away; and she was beseeching my spirit to come to their aid, even from the land of the white man, whenever her family was afflicted with trouble or sickness and called to me for help. "Hearken to our call," she exclaimed again and again; and Ikpuck from his side echoed her entreaty.

We sat in silence after the ceremony, absorbed in our own thoughts. The pathos of their appeal weighed on me heavily. A few short months before I had come out of the mists, a strange and unexpected visitor, to interrupt the peaceful current of their lives. They had received me into their family, nursed me in sickness, clothed me and fed me in times of stress and starvation, bestowed on me the same trust, the same affection, that they gave to their own children. Little it was that I had been able to give them in return. Now

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they were making their one final appeal. What had my "spirit" answered? What could it answer? When trouble came upon them, as it surely must, and they cried to me for help, would they think me ungrateful if no help came? At last I turned to Icehouse and said, "Sometimes, you know, it is not possible to help." And she answered sadly, "Yes. There are many evil spirits surrounding us, and sometimes no help is possible."

I finished the packing of my specimens before the end of June, and since the heavy ice in the strait would prevent our sailing for at least two weeks, I thought I might travel down to Cape Krusenstern for a farewell view of some Eskimos who were still fishing in the various streams. Patsy was to accompany me, and, with the consent of Ikpuck and Icehouse, I invited Jennie to go with us. She danced with glee at the prospect. Without further delay, we rolled up our packs, loaded two dogs with extra provisions, and marched away over the tundra.

Jennie was the merriest of companions, and the most useful. She laughed when the dogs chased a sandpiper, she laughed when she stumbled over a niggerhead. Her laughter was infectious, and no merrier party ever tramped those northern meadows. She was only twelve years of age, or thirteen at the most, with all a child's love of play and pastime; yet already she knew some of the responsibilities of her sex, and at the

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sauntered down to the weir. As I watched her she shouted, and wading into the water, plied her spear frantically to right and left. Instantly the camp was in an uproar. First the men dashed out, some naked, some half dressed, and, racing headlong to the stream, plunged into the water after her; but all the women loitered in the rear. Then shrieks of laughter mingled with the loud shouts and angry ejaculations of the men; the weir was empty, and the women had taken their revenge.

There was an elderly medicine-man in this camp, one whom we had nicknamed Socrates on account of his snub nose and unusual ugliness. He was a good-natured fellow, but rather dull-witted, and of no great authority among his countrymen because his guardian spirits were credited with little power. He thought fit to hold a séance during our visit, and, from sheer malice, as I believe, directed his utterances against Patsy and myself. Amid much unintelligible nonsense, he alluded to Patsy as the boy whose legs were too long, and to myself as the man who was frightening away the fish by dipping an iron cup into the water, iron, as every one knew, being distasteful to the salmon. But, unfortunately for his credit, the largest shoal of the season unexpectedly entered the weir within two hours of his séance, and the Eskimos, who attributed it to myself in some way, laughed at their seer, who perforce concealed his discomfiture under a foolish smile.

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123 They then offered us several of their finest prizes and entreated us to stay a few days longer, probably hoping for a continuance of their good luck; but I could not linger. We distributed a few needles and matches among them, and departed while their expressions of goodwill still rang in our ears.

136 This renewal of the salmon migration occurred everywhere along the coast, reaching the two families [123] that were taking care of my dog. Apparently it was an unusual phenomenon, for they, too, ascribed it to my intervention. When I had left them they had shouted after me to "will" that more fish should enter their stream. More fish had come, several shoals of [231] them and they were deeply grateful. So they showered their gratitude on the dog, which was so gorged with fat salmon that it could hardly rise to its feet to welcome us.

226 The natives who had been camping close to the station had moved away when the first run of the salmon ended, and only Ikpuck and Icehouse remained in possession of their stream. My parents themselves were about to abandon it when the second run started and deluged them with its rapid succession of shoals, four and even five in one day. Husband and wife toiled incessantly for a week, cleaning and drying the fish and 261 storing them away under piles of stones. Never before had they gathered so abundant a supply against the early winter months, when the caribou disappeared to

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the southward and the ice was too treacherous for the seal-hunt. Yet their joy, great as it was, did not surpass my own, because now I could sail away with the comforting thought that for one year at least starvation would hardly approach their door.

A few days later Cox and I brought them to the station in a large skin boat to which we had attached an outboard motor. They allowed us to pack all their possessions on board without a protest, but drew back in dismay when we suggested their own embarkation. For a long time we urged them in vain, but at last Icehouse yielded, and nervously adjusted herself on the middle thwart. Ikpuck stepped in beside her, he, too, looking somewhat dubious, although he had often speared caribou from a precarious one-man kayak. Seated in the bow facing them, I could not resist the temptation to rock the boat a little. Ikpuck watched me with anxious eyes, but his wife gripped the gunwale desperately with both hands and screamed with all her might. "Jennesi, stop, stop!" she cried as soon as she regained her breath, and added, more quietly, "I did not think my son would ever frighten me so badly." Amazement overcame their fears when we pushed out into deep water and started up the engine; and like happy school-children, they both trailed their hands over the side throughout the journey to feel the swirl of the water.

Another new pleasure awaited them at the station,

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[23 for we took them on board the schooner when we made a trial run outside the harbour. It was a genuine voyage of discovery. First they explored the vessel from the forecastle to the stern, peering into every nook and corner except the engine-room, which alarmed them with its fumes and noise. Presently, finding below-decks too prison-like for their fancy, they climbed the stairway again and, standing in the bow, watched with child-like glee the rapid passing of the headlands.

I had promised Ikpuck that I would not leave him unprovided with the weapons and cartridges that he had learned to regard almost as necessities. I had already changed his .44 Winchester for a more powerful 30.30, transferring the former to Jennie; and I now added the .22 automatic rifle on which he had set his heart for killing small game and birds. Two full cases of ammunition went with each new weapon, and for Jennie's .44 I provided brass shells and 3000 primers, with powder and lead to correspond. Of this reloading outfit, however, they promised to reserve one third for The Runner, who had returned to Victoria Island early in May rejoicing in a brand-new .44 and enough ammunition to last him the whole summer.

Other things, too, my family needed, not useless luxuries, but things that would help them in their daily life. Icehouse asked for pots and a frying-pan, needles, thread, scissors, and enough cloth to make several suits of overalls for herself and her household.

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Ikpuck received tools of various kinds, a high-powered binocular to aid his hunting, two seines that would supplement his fish-spear and fishing-rod, a light cloth tent to replace the heavy one of skin that he packed all summer on his back, and last, but not least, a Peterborough canoe. Of all these gifts the canoe perhaps pleased him most. We used it immediately to freight most of his dried fish over to a small island that was inaccessible to foxes and other animals until the sea froze over again.

It was melancholy to reflect, during these last days, how little I had done, how little I could do, to ensure the welfare of my family during the years to follow. Nature had not been kind to their land. The winters were long and severe, the summers too short and too late in their arrival to permit the growth of fruits or cereals. Isolated from the great world outside, my parents, like all their tribesmen, could maintain themselves only on what the country itself provided—meat and fish in the spring and summer, fish and meat again in the fall and winter. Permanent homes they had none; life was a perpetual wandering in search of food, a wandering that ended only with death. The winter's twilight had shown me their blurred forms dragging the over burdened sleds from one sealing-ground to another to escape the threat of famine; and the midnight sun had shone on husband, wife, and little daughter, weighted down with heavy packs, stumbling over

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221 the trackless land to a new fishing-lake in the hope of breaking their fast before another sleep. Food, clothing, and shelter, those primal necessities that generally come so easily to dwellers in more temperate climes, demanded from them ceaseless effort, until the desperate battle to preserve life seemed almost to nullify any purpose for life. Only an invincibly optimistic race, patient, hardy, and good-tempered, could have wrestled with this environment and survived. What could a white man contribute to its struggle?—a white man who appeared for a season only, then vanished as mysteriously as he came.

114 The day for our departure arrived at last; the date was July 13, 1916. Heavy ice still lingered outside the harbour, but a channel of open water extended to the westward and widened near the horizon. From morning till nearly evening we laboured at our preparations, striking the last of the tents, dismantling the last of the caches. Everything was finished at 6 o'clock, and, after a hasty supper, I went ashore in the dinghy while my companions pulled up the anchor.

123 My family had pitched its tent at the entrance to the harbour, where a breeze from the sea blowing across the low promontory kept away the mosquitoes. They were seated outside the doorway, intently watching our movements, but Ikpuck and Jennie came down to the beach to pull up my boat. I sat down beside them, and we watched in silence, Jennie alone in her childish

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wonder uttering an occasional exclamation. We heard 123 •
the creaking of the winch as the anchor was lifted, and
we saw the vessel swing slowly round and move toward
the entrance. Two bells—the engines stopped. "I
am going," I said, as I threw at Icehouse's feet the
leather belt that I had worn in my wanderings, the
belt that she had so often examined with envious eyes.
Ikpuck and Jennie pushed off the dinghy. "I am [576]
going," I said again, using their only greeting of fare-
well; and they answered together, "You are going."

In the open channel that led us westward I climbed
to the crow's-nest and looked back toward the land
through my binoculars. The brown monotonous coast-
line rose and fell in gentle undulations far across the
moving ice-field. Where shore and ice commingled
a solitary tent showed faintly. Something dark beside
it seemed to move. Was it Ikpuck?

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L'ENVOI

123 THE Great War was ended, and I sat at my desk again, absorbed in the routine of my every-day work. There was a knock at the door, and Girling entered, but lately returned from a five years' sojourn in the land of twilight. "Icehouse sends you a message," he said; "a message to the son who left her four years ago. She has heard of your marriage, and she longs for a picture of the strange white woman who is now her daughter. She wants, too, a bowl, a large agate bowl. But the picture she desires more than all."

Three years passed before the second message came, this time from Ikpuck. "Jennie your sister is married and has a son. But I am growing old. Come back and stay with me once more before I die."

177 What will the next message say, I wonder? The [439] country has changed since 1916. Even while we said our farewells the traders were all heading eastward to the new land where beautiful white fox skins were valueless and a fortune could be gained in a night. White men have invaded it from every quarter, and the twilight of ignorance and superstition is yielding [411] to the dawn of a greater knowledge. Bows and arrows have passed with other weapons into the darkness of

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
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EPILOGUE

123 FOUR years after Girling brought me the message from Icehouse a radio station at the mouth of the Coppermine River sent me this call from Ikpuck:

"Come back and hunt with me once more on Victoria Island." Jennie added her appeal:

"If you come I will make you a new suit of clothes. But come quickly, for I may not live long."

No call came from Icehouse. She had succumbed a few months earlier to the influenza that had been carried into Coronation Gulf from the white man's world. And Ikpuck never sent a second call.

When summer came round the old hunter wandered back with two or three companions to our stamping grounds on Victoria Island. One morning he went out alone to look for caribou and did not return. No one knows what happened; but of one thing I am sure, that when the angel drew near and offered him the darker draught he drained it without shrinking. Jennie lost her first baby about the same time; and she herself followed it within six months, victim of the tuberculosis that was to carry off her husband also. In America, as elsewhere, the kiss of the white man has brought death to numberless natives whom isolation had protected from our diseases; and the People of the Twilight did not escape.